

A
PRAIRIE
PARSON

BY
R.W.
CAMPBELL

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A PRAIRIE
PARSON

By
R.W. CAMPBELL
Author of
SPUD TAMSON Out West

*Fiction
Inter not Canadian
partially Canadian setting*

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A PRAIRIE PARSON

BY

CAPTAIN R. W. CAMPBELL

Author of

'Private Spud Tamson,' 'Jimmy McCallum,' &c.

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TO
THE PRAIRIE PARSONS
OF ALL DENOMINATIONS
WHO HAVE LABOURED
EARNESTLY AND LONG
FOR THE
PEOPLE OF THE PLAINS

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BOOK I.



A PRAIRIE PARSON

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A PRAIRIE PARSON.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE SADDLE TO THE PULPIT.

FROM the saddle of a cavalry charger to the pulpit of a church is a strange jump ; but truth always has been stranger than fiction. While I cherish the happy memories of an officer's lot in the Scots Greys, I have found in the Church a wider field. So busy has my ministerial life been that it seems but a day since I rode at the head of a troop of heavy cavalry along Princes Street, Edinburgh. Vanity was my portion in youth ; still, it was an honourable vanity. Even to-day I have a sort of longing to hear the trumpets, the clatter of hoofs, and give the old command, 'Prepare to mount! . . . Mount! . . . Fours right! . . . Walk march!'

When an officer, especially a cavalry officer, becomes ordained, the world generally gasps

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with astonishment. Somehow it has got abroad that a cavalry mess is tenanted only by hurdle-jumping Beau Brummells and Don Juans. Wine and women are said to be linked to horses. At county balls the ladies expect the cavalry to give a lead. This tradition comes down from the feudal age, when knights in armour catered for glory and romance at the tournament or below a lady's grille. The tradition is more true of the light cavalry; hussars are always hussars—light in the saddle, light in the lounge. But weight often carries with it solemnity and reflection. Dr Johnson illustrates that well. In the Scots Greys there was also a calvinistic vein; though many of the officers had Jacobite traditions, the majority favoured the theology of Knox. Anyhow, I found in the army time for reflection, evidence of faith, and the call to the Church.

But the day I left Piershill Barracks, Edinburgh, was a sad one. There was so much to love and admire in the army. The colonel was a great gentleman—my brother officers so chivalrous and companionable—and my troop the best in the regiment; at least we thought so—that is *esprit de corps*. However, once the plunge was taken, I soon found that the Church was mightier than

the sword. Divinity classes were certainly strange after years of an officers' mess, where one need only study drill-books, Bradshaws, and illustrated magazines. Culture has charms. Difficult as it was to grip the atmosphere of a divinity hall, once I felt my feet there opened up a future based on solid things, and with access not only to the mind of the Master, but to thoughts of all who had achieved immortality. The classics, hard as these are to master, have an unfailing charm, and yield the groundwork for a sound philosophy. The Bible is pure literature. Many of my lecturers were great divines. Listening to the soft, cultured, and reasonable voices of good and noble men was, to me, a new and wonderful experience. Day by day one stumbled on to new, yet old, discoveries. Virtue, for example, is not so difficult to attain when the mind is fully employed, body regularly exercised, and a plain diet takes the place of those courses which produce an annual crop of gouty visitors to Karlsbad and Harrogate.

My fellow-students were different from my old companions in the officers' mess. One never heard the accent of Mayfair or saw the suits of Bond Street. The names were not so fashionable. 'Form,' that hall-mark of

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the counties, was not so pronounced. 'Polish,' superficial as it often is, has also charms. One missed the studied, if stereotyped, courtesy of a cavalry mess. For a long long time the snob within me had a hard struggle in the democratic atmosphere of divinity classes. At first I felt isolated, marooned. Sitting side by side with the sons of crofters, merchants, and artisans was a new experience. To an officer of the army it was like becoming too familiar with the men. The gulf imposed by caste, discipline, and the King's Regulations is a fearful thing to bridge. Hauteur, somehow, comes to one who has commanded troops. Of course, such an attitude is unchristian; it was unworthy of the good cause I had engaged in. For God's sake it had to be repressed. I did my best. But even to this day, when off my guard and suddenly addressed by a too familiar visitor, I stiffen and look like a Brigadier Gerard, rather than a minister of the Church. One simply cannot get away from the environment of youth.

My fellow-students were younger than I. The majority were the bright and plodding sons of ambitious but godly people. There were exceptions. The relative of the great 'Norman' was one. He had plenty of money,

amazing influence with the 'big guns,' and was so imposing that we styled him 'the bishop.' Had his relative not been the all-powerful Norman I imagine he might have been tempted to don cassock and surplice and climb to the Palace of York, Lambeth, or Canterbury. But he was the exceptional child of fortune; the majority were poor. One had to admire their faith and industry. Friendless and without means, they had to work hard at their classes. In the summer they went harvesting or as ships' pursers, even seaside minstrels.

Behind all of these men were simple pious parents who slaved on the land or behind the counter that their sons might get through college and secure a kirk. Ambition certainly played a part in the scheme, but it was an honourable ambition. Education here and there was too much of a fetish, but on the whole there was in evidence that patient searching for the laurels of faith and truth which for centuries has been the glory of the churches of Scotland. The road to the ministry was a hard road, and often it crushed the weak; nevertheless this has been for the ultimate good of the country. The scholarship of the manse is a bright page in our national story.

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What one did miss was the absence of sparkle, the lack of good cheerful fun. We had laughter of a kind, but it was not the highly-organised tomfoolery of the Oxford Union. The east wind of Edinburgh, coupled with the grim Calvinism of Knox, had a chilling effect. Many felt that it was rather unbecoming, if not wicked, to have a good highland fling, a *real* smoking-concert like the medical students, and more freedom with the writings of Shelley and Burns. I imagine that my training had made me a little cosmopolitan. For orthodox solemnity I never have had much use. I am on the side of the Moderates—up to a point. Nevertheless, it was necessary to have sympathy with my fellow-students. From their parents they had imbibed the stern traditions of the high fliers who, in the old days, loyally defended the courtmartial of moral backsliders before the kirk session. Poverty has also helped that grim dour look. Repression by alien kings and laws has silenced to a marked degree the instinct to hooch and laugh. Gravity is in the standing orders of the kirk, but too much gravity chills the hearts of elders and frightens the bonnie bairns. And in some things we Scots are hypocrites.

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But as I got my hand in at the classes and my body inside the lodgings of my new-found friends, I discovered beauties hitherto undreamed of. The most striking thing was the mesmerising effect of simplicity. All divinity students are not divine, but I must say the majority of these men were remarkable for their child-like innocence. After handling troopers, who know a good deal about the rough and unpleasant side of human nature, it was an edifying experience to look into the eyes of men who could be fooled. But such fooling acts like a boomerang. Simplicity defeats the Machiavelli. Malice, satire, or common or garden scorn makes no impression on the true simplicity. The man about town, also the accomplished roué, grins at the child of the angels, but the grin is seldom returned. The really good man has no vendetta. The charity of the true is always beautiful to behold. How rich it is! How incorruptible!

After being ordained, I became an assistant minister to a well-known military chaplain in Edinburgh. He did the preaching, I did the visiting—but at that time I would rather have done the preaching. The work was amongst the soldiers—quite interesting,

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most useful, but not quite the job for me; I was greatly handicapped through having served as an officer. The soldier knows at a glance a man who has held a commission. And in those days an officer was a little tin god. For good ministerial reasons I wanted to be done with saluting, heel clicking, and big salaams. Ceremony only creates barriers. "My job was to gain the confidence and affection of my flock. Need I confess it, at times when I heard the trumpets' call, and the band playing the regiments on the march, I was often tempted to tear off the collar and get into the saddle again. Militarism is a disease. Once a soldier, always a soldier. There is a witchery about a red coat, but I had decided to wear a black coat. To carry out that honest ambition I fled from Edinburgh to a manse in Ayrshire. I was happy—for a time.

Of all the great days in my life my induction to that little country kirk still stands out in my memory like a beacon on the mountain. I was happy. I was proud, though a trifle confused. Leading a troop of cavalry was easy; standing there in front of an expectant congregation was an ordeal, as it is rightly meant to be. The

dear old minister who conducted the ceremony was a patriarch of the old school—so wise, so stately, so full of human sympathy and understanding. And the folks had come to see the minister from the Scots Greys. There were honest doubters in the throng. For centuries the people in country parishes have believed that a ‘man who went to the sodgers went to the dogs.’ The only difference between the soldier and the officer was that the officer had the hereditary right to go to the dogs, which reveals a concession from feudal minds. Nevertheless, the minister was the minister. The faith and respect given to the cloth is one of the most beautiful aspects of Scottish character. Often that faith has been destroyed by self-seeking, insincerity, and co-operation with political chameleons. Shattered as it has been during the last twenty years, I still believe that a good minister has as much power as Wesley or Norman Macleod.

The striking notes of a new ministry are the presentation of gifts, such as robes and a Bible, and the honest enthusiasm of the congregation. There is also the desire of the curious to know the ‘in and oots’ of the new man. A bachelor, as I was, gets

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a more easy passage; the women are more lenient on the unattached. The reasons are obvious—marrying a minister has always been the ambition of nice country girls. Advice is given in plenty. For example, the venerable divine who conducted the induction ceremony said on leaving me: ‘Keep your mouth shut, your eyes open, and your neb oot o’ politics, and you’ll do all right.’ Quite good advice—in parts. In plain language, however, this means to many young men: ‘Offend none, do little, and watch how the cat jumps!’ A weak or a lazy man embraces these instructions; the strong man worries out the problem. The Auld Kirk presents an excellent couch to the sluggard; no church affords such power for instant action in the cause of all that is high. The salary is assured; a good, also a bad arrangement. The fool can go to sleep, the worker can go forward fearless of the consequences, bowing only to the Lord.

The village was an artist’s dream, but beneath the calm were cliques, storms, and unruly passions. The Auld Kirk was ‘The Tory Kirk,’ the U.P. church was ‘The Leebéral Kirk.’ This was a class division and, at times,

a class war. That hurt me, hurt me to the bone. My colleague of the U.P. church was a great scholar, also a great gentleman. When I got to know him better, we formed a compact to kill class and church distinctions. By holding joint evening services the work was begun. But the memories of the Secession were rooted deep. In many hearts the war was not against sin, but against myths long departed. I loved these people, yet I pitied their blindness, and seldom counter-attacked when bitterness against me came to my ears. A year's work certainly convinced me of the opportunities of the Church, as it overwhelmed me with difficulties, wholly artificial, based on petty jealousies, family squabbles, business rivalry, and politics. God, how I hated politics! What a cruel fanaticism it stirred! Even gentlemen became clowns and terrorists.

Looking back at those early struggles, I can now see that my anchor was the real goodness which lay beneath the puddles o' discontent. In odd corners and from unexpected sources came gleams of hope and sunshine. Self-discipline helped me enormously. My military temper had to be bridled and snaffled. My impetuous activities

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often had to be chained by sheer force of will. One had to learn there were others in this world. One, perforce, discovered that all goodness in the parish did not come from the manse. Tolstoi is not my god, but I did discover in the humblest but and ben a faith, hope and charity which saved my sanity. The first year may be truly likened to a gradual climb from doubt to surety.

Remarkable to relate, my friendship with my colleague of the U.P. Church found little favour in the eyes of a small group, who believed that the Establishment, the Union Jack, and the hotel license were endangered by the 'U.P's.'

'It's no' usual for the parish minister tae be ower friendly with the U.P. man,' an elder hinted.

'Why?' I asked.

'They never vote richt,' was his reply.

But I'm a minister,' I insisted.

'We ken that. We're no' ill pleased wi' ye. But you're no' to forget this is the Tory kirk.'

'But you must know that the U.P. minister is a great friend of Lord ——s, and he is one of the heritors.'

'Oh ay, but the laird can afford tae be friendly; we cannae.'

‘Tell me why.’

‘If the U.P. man has his way he’ll tak’ awa’ the hotel license, and my grocer’s license tae.’

‘So would I,’ was my answer.

‘You would!’ he roared.

‘Yes.’

‘Then, d—— ye, I’m feenisht wi’ the Auld Kirk;’ and he went off down the road.

I played golf with the U.P. minister next day.

CHAPTER II.

WORK IN GLASGOW.

A VILLAGE has many charms. The country manse, despite the maze of pettiness which sometimes surrounds it, is a place to dream dreams. Removed from the bustle and hustle of industrial turmoil, one finds in the woods, the fields, the lanes, and brawling burns wonderful evidence of the glory of nature and the unfailing magnitude of God. To the minister who is a man of books, or an industrious scribe, such a life has many attractions. I have often thought that country manses should be reserved for the scholars, also the veterans of the church. A few short years proved that while a young minister *can* do enormous good in a rural parish, his real place is in the city, where youthful energy is urgently required. The temptations to slack are strong in a country parish.

Experience of this parish caused me to take the long view of human nature and to embrace an optimistic code. There are dark spots in our rural world. Intermarriage

for centuries has not helped the physique or the psychology of the inhabitants. Absence of culture always tends to brutalise. Poverty has a rasping effect. Tea and jam are abominable inventions, for these things have banished, to a large extent, the belief in kale and brose, with lamentable results to the physique of the children. Worse, contact with animals and the needs of the stud-book create an atmosphere which gives to several the morals of Sodom. These problems have killed the high hopes of many good men; indeed, I recall my visit to a ministerial friend who frankly confessed his inability to stem the surging tide of unwholesome decadence. He was beaten; he was letting things slide. Life had no more joy for him. He was waiting impatiently for the call of the grave. My heart was touched with the awful confession. Knowing his task in a lone hill parish, I did not scorn and spurn him. But I did pray that God would send the light again.

But there is a bright side. One cannot find it by sitting down in the manse. On the roads, in the fields, on the farms, ay, even in castles, there can be found men and women whose lives are a joy to behold; and whose loving christianity is more inspiring

by far than all the Acts of the Apostles. In the Ayrshire parish of which I speak I have been humbled by the quiet dignity, the noble mien, and philosophical outlook of a humble roadman. His rough clothes, red cravat, and mud-covered boots seemed to enhance his kingly bearing. Fools feared him, but the wise took from his lips that wisdom which comes only from true nobility. My old gardener, Peter, was also an inspiration to me. I have found him at 5 A.M. on a summer's morning worshipping the glory of the sun and listening enraptured to the love-songs of the birds. He found no embarrassments in his humble part. Labour had no indignities. Work he relished for the joy of health, and his evenings were evenings of amiable discussion, studious reflection, or quiet praise as he smoked his pipe and watched the sweet-william and the tatties grow. Peter had gripped the grand secret. At times I envied him. He and the village blacksmith turned the smiddy into a fascinating forum.

One thing that did impress me was the number of fine young women, well educated, highly skilled in all the arts of domesticity, nearly all with 'a tocher,' but few lovers in sight. This wastage of the finest women

in our middle classes is a sad and a bad thing for the race. I believe that in all the counties the tragedy to-day is greater still. What a pity ! especially when I know that my own dear Canada could welcome and house them all. But I did my own part in this great task. In the parish I found the charming lady who is now my wife. She is over sixty now, much worn with the long long years of the prairie. Yet, somehow, I see no gray hairs, no faltering steps, for she smiles ; she is as kind and as faithful as of yore. Yes, I will even alarm the dignitaries of the Church by stating that at times, when in doubt (generally caused by indigestion) about the whole future of religion and the Church, even the origin of the gospels, my wife's sweet ways and homely commonsense helped me over the stile. As a matter of fact, it is my belief that in the goodness of human nature, as revealed in daily work and conversation, there is a greater lever to repel the assaults of those diseased cynics who revile the ministry. Of course this is allied almost solely to ethics, and around that theme there have been long harangues. As Peter would say : 'Theology is ower deeleberate, an' no' quick enough for me.' And on the prairie one must be a

man of action rather than a juggler with the scriptures.

After a few years I took up my bed and walked to Glasgow, but not until after a severe mental struggle. I loved the parish, and I think many of the people liked me. But the terrors of slacking were approaching the manse. I was being lured into ease and indolence: that, as you know, is as dangerous to the body as it is to the soul.

Work for the night is coming,
Work through the dewy morn,

would have vanished from my keeping if I had not resisted the snares of rusticity. Apart from that, a country parish was no place for me—a young strong man. There were men in the cities feeble with years of toil. There was work and greater work in the city of Glasgow. Again I answered the real call of the soul. But the physical penalties were severe. To go from the sweet-smelling highways to the noisy streets was a more startling change than I imagined. My idealism had thrown around the city more magic than was there. There was culture, there was books, there was contact with more noble minds; but one's bedroom

faced gaunt stone walls, the sky was gray, the atmosphere was smoked, noise was everywhere, and every minute saw a stunted body and soul go past the door. Oh yes, my dreams were awkward things—at times.

But the task was good; the needs were many; one could get going without permission of little minds who watched how the cat jumped. And the bairns, the dear bairns, ragged, dirty and jammy-nosed, simply called one on. One week in my church in Glasgow convinced me that if I attempted to save the souls of those grown-ups who passed the church door, I would not achieve as much for God as by fighting for and guarding the children. There are ministers who have those emotional gifts which can attract and hold the adults. I am not built like that. Emotion is useful, but not always enduring. Emotion has always been the handmaiden of a great revivalist, but frankly, I prefer the more solid task. Earnest labour, good organisation, friendships and friendships, faith in the slums and darkness of despair. Emotion is the broad way to heaven. The narrow way, hard, tortuous, and tiring as it is, brings at the end of the day greater satis-

faction to the soul. To prove my point: how many of the great emotionalists survive the test of time? The preaching minister can fill the kirk, but unless he is a Wesley, a Spurgeon, or a Norman Macleod, he will not leave a single landmark on the road. I may be wrong, even unjust, and this view may be stressed through contact with a young parish minister in the south of Scotland, who filled his kirk on Sunday by his boasting of God, and who through the week achieved popularity with the unthinking by pronouncing day by day that there were worse things in the world than drunkenness and debauchery. That man was a hero—for a time; but when the shallowness of this doctrine was well revealed there was a 'skailin' o' the kirk,' and a sudden accession to the flock of a quiet old U.P. minister who for *forty years* had toiled, visited, and given the tenth of his portion to the sick and the sad. 'Work while ye have the light,' said Tolstoi. Only by work, hard work, can we achieve immortality. And it is time that the people of all denominations should realise that the minister who plods on on their behalf year by year is as helpful a man as Augustine or St Paul.

To the elders I consigned the care of the adults; the children I gathered around me. As I recall those happy happy days, my heart is stirred and my eyes become dim. Children are jewels; children reflect the goodness and glory of God. Even in rags one detects that beauty which is the early portion of all. To underrate the intelligence of children is foolish. To make them but tools of religion is equally vain. Even the youngest are shrewd; they can read character; they know by our faces whether we are heroes or fools. To those they love they will give all. For this devotion it is worth striving. 'The minister likes the bairns because they cannae talk back to him,' I once heard a gossiping woman say. But all mothers are not like that. Many a bad home has been purified through getting at the children. In the parliaments of the world there are men who owe their all to the lift and opportunity given them by the clergy. At times I think we ministers are too humble. Considering how we are all being spent in the task of righteousness, surely our elders should batten down the barrage of insolence!

My Sunday School increased from 128 to 450, the limit of our accommodation. My

fashionable friends with whom I served in the army often were startled when they met the surging and somewhat ragged throng. But when the bell clanged, there was order, and then they would rise and sing, in that earnest, beautiful way which children have :

Jesus loves me ! this I know,
For the Bible tells me so ;
Little ones to Him belong,
They are weak, but He is strong.
Yes ! Jesus loves me !
Yes ! Jesus loves me !
Yes ! Jesus loves me !
The Bi—ble tells me so.

There are men who, on recalling that old and very simple hymn, will find something rising in the throat. It is a link with the Golden Age, when all the world was wonderful, Life a glorious dream.

One Sunday an old general witnessed such a scene. He was a hard man ; his life had not been a pattern for others. I had experienced his cynicism. But at the conclusion of the service he took my hand, shook it fervently, and without saying a word walked out of the door. As he reached the street I saw him brush a handkerchief across his eyes, then walk on

thinking . . . thinking. It was then I fully realised that my sacrifices of earthly things had brought a rich reward.

As a minister in Glasgow I found environment almost fatal to enthusiasm. The citizens are not so godless as they are painted. Circumstances have militated against religion. Glasgow was built in a hurry; jammed on top of middens; distrustful of big windows and gardens; hedged in with chimney-stalks and forbidding factories, and the whole capped with soot and grime. Commercially, Glasgow has brought glory to Scotland, but at what a price! The harvest of disease, disbelief, and pauperdom is a fearful bargain for success. Often I prayed for an earthquake or a devastating fire to blot out the tenements of the nineteenth century, so that we could commence again. It may be a city to be proud of, but only in parts. As a whole it is a monument to the blind greed of the Lords o' the Plainstones. O for Vesuvius! And then a Cadbury!

My experience in Glasgow convinced me that a surplus population is not really a good

thing for religion, business, or health. Only the police, poor-law officers, and the ministry know of the demoralisation that has set in. Back to the land was certainly the remedy; but the adults then, as now, were unfit for the land; and in the times I write of it was hopeless for a minister to preach the doctrine of Cadbury, Leverhulme, or the better side of Owen. The gulf between the classes was wide and distinct. Success had been hurried. Had it not been for the amazing energy of Dr Russell, the City Medical Officer of Health, Glasgow would to-day be reaping a still greater harvest of disease. This great man stirred the public conscience. Against fearful odds he fought the battles of the poor. He prayed God morning, noon, and night for sun, gardens, and fresh air. When he could not get it otherwise, he got it by stealth or the threat of publicity against the obstructionists.

Contact with these pressing social problems almost sent me from the Church into politics. Faced with the awful terrors of sickness and poverty, I suddenly realised how little I could do. This same problem embittered Chalmers, the leader of the Disruption, and, at times, it staggered Norman Macleod. Looking back, I now see that

the Church did not fully realise the menace. Had all denominations got behind that group of giants then led by Dr Russell, I believe that the industrial, social, and religious conditions of Glasgow could have been altered in such a way as to have avoided the harvest of bitterness which, as I gather from home papers, has resulted in that rank doctrine of materialism—communism.

Hence came the iron into my soul—for a time. In fits of depression I felt the lure of politics as a cure for the ills of man. Being almost a childish idealist, I saw only the roseate hues of the political world. For a time I dabbled in the game, but in the nick of time I pulled out. One peep behind the political curtain convinced me that miracles are not performed by platforms or parties. The imperfections of this world can best be remedied by self-analysis. Education, co-operation between employer and employee, and faith in God are surer roads. And we must frankly recognise the evils of over-population. Emigration is not a cure; but it is a help.

The emigration of many of my congregation, as well as an urgent call for ministers to go to Canada, decided my real future. Having served as a soldier, several leading

church dignitaries pressed on me the need and use of pioneering for our church. Again I took up my bed and walked. Ever since I have been travelling the woods and the prairie.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE IN THE WOODS.

IT is over thirty years ago since I landed in Canada. Great are the changes since those early days. When I arrived, Canada was just passing from years of obscurity into a period pregnant with fame. It was a land of old-timers, wooden shacks, railway camps, Indian tepees, and police patrols. The fur traders, though not in power, were still predominant, the cowboys ruled the ranges. Buffaloes could be seen. Bears ambled innocently around the log camps. Wolves barked at the door at nights. The mountain-lion could be found. Cities in the east were raw and rude; towns of the west were primitive and sometimes lawless. Horse-thieving and rum-running were almost fashionable pursuits on the boundary. Everything was primitive or brand-new. But the work of progress was going on.

New countries are not developed by angels. It is just as well to grip that at the start. Only the strong could face the labour of the log camps, the construction of railways, and

■

roads through the mountains. Adventurers are not kid-gloved gentlemen. The Legion of the Lost Ones, lawless and foolish though they may have been, helped to lay the foundations of this great dominion. Historians, afraid of an unduly sensitive public, and anxious to please, are apt to give a pretty-pretty picture of these really stirring times; this procedure only blinds the trail and minimises the hardships experienced. It is also fashionable to assault Kipling for writing 'My Lady of the Snow.' According to badly-educated propagandists one must never mention the snow. The snow must be hidden; only the sunshine allowed. These foolish ones forget that the snow figures in all the greatest deeds in Canada. I love the snow. My children revel in it. My wife soon tires of the summer; for if the snow is awkward in winter, it is beautiful, it is bracing. And the curling's grand! Without the curling what should I do!

The hardships in those early days were fearful at times. The Gospel of God was by no means a paying or a popular business. The saloon boss was a greater hero than the parson. *Moll Flanders* was more thumbed than the Bible. 'Beer, glorious beer!' was more often heard than 'Lead, kindly light.'

Churches were few and far between. Elders were hard to find. Services often were held in bar parlours or livery barns. The pulpit was staged on barrels, bags, or logs. Organs were far far away. As in the days of old in Scotland, the tuning-fork was used for the key of the psalms. One often had to have a round-up of the boys to make a service. At times the mailed fist was necessary to illustrate that ministers would and could defend the Faith. I loved it all. These times are too tame and well arranged for me. My ways are organised. O for the days of the pioneer! O for a glimpse of the broken trail!

For the first few years I wandered on the back of a Scots Grey mare. The saddle was often a pulpit, an old tin mug my communion cup; the lessons being read from a pocket Bible, and hymns announced verse by verse. From the most lawless and most godless I have experienced a generous hospitality. Caste, convention, and side had to be left behind. The frankness and apparent insolence of democracy at first appalled, but as the days passed on one got used to being called 'Sandy,' and joked at by rough-and-ready woodmen and railway navvies. A remarkable change from life in

an Ayrshire or a Glasgow manse, but I liked it; it suited me; the wanderlust was given full play; the saddle was mine again. Out of the broken trails, the silent woods, rushing rivers, and gorgeous waterfalls of Eastern Canada I plucked the charms of nature and hugged the beauty to my soul. My old horse often beat the trail of the French and Highland *voyageurs*. One stumbled now and again on to the tracks of Strathcona, Sandford Fleming, Jim Hill, Van Horne, Moberley, and Dennis, as well as the earlier footprints of the men of Glengarry who had fought in the rebellion of '45 and found in Canada a refuge from the vengeance of Cumberland.

My salary averaged twenty dollars a week. But money was of no importance so long as one could get clothes and a few books. In the camps and lonely shacks one always found a meal; my horse was a good forager; what more did we require?

At that time emigration was in full but unregulated flow. There was no paternalism about government methods, other than providing the land. To-day I often notice cries of indignation against the lack of links in the emigration chain, but the emigrant to-day is 'on velvet' compared with

the times I write about. When I think of the amazing courage and fortitude of the early settlers I sometimes wonder if the men of to-day are over-civilised and unable to pioneer as we had to. I have seen Scots settlers arrive at a new settlement armed only with axes, and a bag of corn seed. By efforts, almost superhuman, they cleared the virgin forest, erected a home, sowed corn between the burnt stumps, and laid the foundations of prosperity and happiness. Their wives were wonderful women; how loyally they persevered. From the wool of the sheep they made blankets and clothing; from the fields they gathered the winter's store. By industry, vision, and a wise economy they, as their fathers did in the glens, created homes—homes that have long been the envy and wonder of Canada. And from these homes they sent sons to the ministry; many of these men have carried the gospel to the lone parts of the West.

My first permanent work was in a lumber-camp in Ontario. The men there were of all nationalities, and—largely because of ignorance and counter-attractions—were steeped in profanity and debauchery. The

life was hard—only the fit survived. The strong man was the god; and the weak, perforce, had to yield homage to the Falstaffs and the Don Juans. Cut off from the world, they had to make their own amusements. Before I arrived, Sundays were spent in mad carousals, cock-fighting, bear-baiting, card-playing, and unseemly brawls. The manager, Big Dick, was an able but most unscrupulous man. He and the storekeeper, Dan the Twister, were in league to more or less rob the men of the fruits of their hard labour. Leading the men were two rough cards, Big Mick, an American, and the Baron, a great red-headed fellow, son of an English peer, who had been chased out of London for cheating at cards, and out of Montreal for unseemly conduct. The queen of the camp was Big Sarah, a good-looking she-devil from New York. The influences for good were therefore few, the difficulties enormous. But in those days a parson could rule if he wanted to; at times he did it with the mailed fist. Here my army training stood me in good stead.

I struck this camp on a Sunday afternoon. My old black hat, frock-coat, and black riding-breeches must have looked odd

to the men on the trail. Shaving was out of the question, so I had a good dark beard. But my body was in tune; I felt tremendously fit. On seeing the unsightly and demoralised camp there was no dismay. One got used to disorder and the signs of pioneering. Still, I smelt trouble on riding into camp. A hundred men, strong, rough clad, and more merry than wise with fire-water, were brawling round a tree. Tied to the tree was a bear in living agony. Drunk men were firing revolver bullets into its fore and hind legs, or less vital parts. The grunts and screams of the animal were awful to hear. It was horrible. Inhumanity of that sort I cannot stand. Galloping forward, I wrenched a revolver out of a man's hand and fired a shot into the animal's brain.

‘Who the——’

‘What the——’

‘Why the——’ roared the foul-mouthed crew.

There was a rush to pull me out of the saddle; but I raised the borrowed revolver, and said, ‘Get back, or I shoot!’ They paused, amazed at my coolness, also amused that a parson should play the lone hand.

‘By Jove, it's Gordon-Rollow of the

Greys!' roared the Baron, giving me a mock salute.

I smiled. I had known him in the Hussars. 'Dismiss the parade,' I said to the Baron, taking up the humorous cue.

'Fall out, boys; this guy is a crack with the sabre and the gun.'

They all laughed in a drunken way, and, following the Baron, they stumbled to their shacks. I followed them, the object of amusing chaff and ridicule. Nevertheless, I was quite pleased with my introduction. With woodmen one must always be quite fearless and willing to stand a rag.

A couple of decent men from Nova Scotia gave me a corner in their own little shack. My horse was stabled with the other animals. In a day I was at home. During the following week I felt my way about the camp. The boys were all right; it was the leadership that was wrong. Many of the decent men were heartsick of the orgies and pined for decency and order. To commence at the bottom was useless. One had to strike at the top, and strike hard.

'Things want cleaning up here,' I said to Big Dick, the manager.

'Guess that's my business,' was his retort.

‘That’s right,’ I replied, pulling out a letter I had written to the owners of the camp, who were in Montreal. In this letter I said that he (Big Dick) was an able but unscrupulous person, the camp demoralised, and the only remedy his instant dismissal—unless he ceased to rob and dope the men with the aid of the storekeeper. I handed this to him.

‘You’ll find yourself dead in a hole if you send that.’

‘Two can play at that game,’ I said in a very quiet voice. Then I demanded his decision.

‘Mind your own business,’ he roared, and his oaths were terrible. But I kept to the point, and after an hour’s useless bullying he was as tame as a sparrow, and promised me that he would not rob the men, and would enforce order. He kept his word.

But the storekeeper, Dan the Twister, was a more difficult person. He started to handle a gun and talked about the — parsons who interfered with a man getting his grub. I kept perfectly cool, lit my pipe, and ignored his six-shooter antics, for I have always found that the man who *talks* about shooting is seldom dangerous—usually he is a coward.

‘It’s like this, Dan,’ I said, after an hour’s harangue; ‘you’ve got to drop your prices twenty-five per cent., cut out the bad booze, and be a decent storekeeper. If not, I’ll ride down for the police, and there are good friends of mine who will give me the cash to start an opposition store. If you don’t play square, we’ll put you out of business. Now, what are you going to do?’

‘I guess you’ve won the trick, but by Gee, I’ll keep that up against you.’

‘That’s good; but don’t get up against me, for you’ll be up against the anger of the Lord.’

‘Mush!’ he roared, as I went out of the door.

The camp gradually improved; the majority of the men came round on my side; and the manager, though sullen, never interfered. The boys built a little mission shack, with quarters for me and the horse. Then we got a savings bank going. When they saw prices drop twenty-five per cent. and the bank-books going up they realised that good government was better than no government at all. Of course they were shy of church services. Sunday had so long been a day of absolute debauchery that it was difficult to line up for a few hymns

and a short sermon. So I compromised. We made an arrangement that if they would stop cock-fighting, drinking, card-playing, and fooling about with Big Sarah and her wicked wantons on Sunday, I would hold Service on Sunday morning, and in the afternoon organise decent sports. This was good business for the Lord, so the agreement was made. For a time we had the best camp for miles round.

But this scheme was far too respectable for the Baron, Big Mick, Sarah, and the wantons. Dan the Twister was not getting enough money out of it, though the owners in Montreal appreciated the change. The output was greater; the men had more money; the camp was more healthy. Still, the opposition was bitter and fierce. At times my life was absolutely miserable. In sobriety the Baron was as good as gold; in drink he was just a brawling demon. Big Mick was always talking about breaking my neck. On principle I dislike physical violence, but one Sunday during the sermon in the shack Mick and the Baron staggered in and commenced to shoot up the lamps and the clock. One of the Nova Scotians laid the Baron out with a blow on the jaw. I seized Mick's revolver and flung it out of the

window. He then attempted to embrace me in a deadly grip, but, tired of his beastly nonsense, I simply gave him a half-Nelson and cracked him down on the floor. He got up and staggered out of the door.

‘I think we have had enough of this nonsense,’ I said to the boys.

‘You bet,’ said the Nova Scotians.

‘Then I leave the matter in your hands,’ was my suggestion.

The Baron, Big Mick, and Sarah were drummed out of camp that afternoon. Dan the Twister suddenly became polite. From that day life in the lumber-camp became a joy. Looking back at those days, I often wonder where all those fine fellows are now. No doubt there are men alive who will remember those days.

CHAPTER IV.

JOY AND SADNESS.

THE great charm about life in Canada is the constant growth of the townships. There is no stagnation, no decay, as in the villages of the Old World. From my shack, which commanded the Sunshine Valley, I saw the forest being gradually cleared. Night after night the stumps were blazing red, and over the far-away hills the smoke drifted like a cloud. The tide of emigration was slow but sure. From England, Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Denmark, and Russia men came to spy out the land, disappear again, then return with women, children, oxen, implements, and seed. In odd corners shack after shack went up; these were plain and unpretentious; only two rooms, with an iron smoke-stack sticking through the roof. The men laboured long and laboured hard. For years and years they had to grind. It was no picnic. There was no wealth for them unless they rooted out the stumps, levelled the fields, fenced

their farms, and applied to the soil all that science and manual labour must give to secure the harvest. In ten years they were safe. In twenty years they and theirs were right for the future.

Things were primitive: sometimes we were almost savages. Mud was always around my boots and clothes. My good wife had to toil long and hard in a three-roomed shack. Luxuries were unknown. With the exception of tea, sugar, boots, and clothes we depended on the community or our garden for supplies. For books I had to pray and often sweat. Our best medicine was letters from home. The mail we lived for. Once a week every man, woman, and child stopped work and kept looking, looking down the road for Bill Duncan on his horse. The hunger for the old land was agonising at times. Often I would go away to the top of the Valley, there sit down and dream about the land of the Mountain and the Flood. Scotland was never so wonderful as in those times. I was thrilled when I heard a stranger speak in the doric. I have travelled twenty miles to meet a man just out from home. In the mission shack the Scots would gather on New Year's Eve and sing with the mist in their eyes:

O but I'm longing for my ain folk,
Though they be but homely, poor, an' plain folk ;
Though I'm far across the sea,
My heart will ever be
At hame in bonnie Scotland
Wi' ma ain folk.

I am a big strong man, but on these occasions I've walked out of the shack to hide my feelings. The love of home was also a good instrument in my hands. Often when baffled with the sins of one who, under the fearful strain of pioneering, had given way to riotous drinking, I have brought him to his senses with a few kind words about the dear old folks at home in the glen. Like General Colin Campbell who, before Alma, threatened that he would stick the name of every fool on the kirk door of the parish, I have held a written letter in my hand as a final weapon in a war against a husband who had been guilty of a serious—but momentary—neglect of his wife and bairns.

The love of home and veneration of the old folks has always struck me as most tender and beautiful. This idealism is instinctive in the race, but Scotsmen in Canada owe to the ministers of all churches in Scotland a long-standing debt for the

kindly care and instruction received in youth. For example, in another Ayrshire parish I know of the work of 'Old John Lamb,' stern and unbending, but high-principled and kind; Robert Smillie, sweet, tender, and thoughtful; Alex. Copeland, flint-like, but a rock against which shams perished; 'Dad Mackenzie,' a great old patriarch, too! But I could go on for hours enumerating plain, godly men who, without self-advertisement or high reward, laboured long and hard under tremendous difficulties to give young men and women that something which has made the Scots in Canada triumphant and supreme. To-day, I am shocked to find a few men, both at home and abroad, who, though gaining enormous wealth through the training and virtues implanted by their parents and the Church, have turned away and forgotten the needs of many a poor old minister who laboured for them in youth. Too long has the Church hidden its light under a bushel, and that is one of the reasons why materialism is brushing us aside to-day.

In our life joy is mixed with sadness; at times I have been enraged with the callousness of man. One of the saddest incidents

in the Ontario township of which I speak was the coming of a beautiful girl from a shop in Bond Street, London. She was so delicately formed. Her features were regal. Never in all my life have I seen such a beautiful form, so fascinating a face, and such wonderful eyes. Marjory was her christian name. She had come to her brother's shack to settle in Canada. Such a girl seemed out of keeping with our rough surroundings; she was so sensitive, so refined. After a few months I missed her. Somehow she never appeared out of doors, though we heard she took a walk with her brother in the evenings. Gossip got busy, and a sad story began to trickle through the township. One cold winter's night, while preparing my sermon, the door opened and Jack, her brother, entered. He was a fine young man, a good settler; this night he was pale and anxious. 'Say, Parson, could the missus come down to-night? My sister's not well. . . . There's a baby coming,' he said in a faltering way.

'I am quite sure she will be only too pleased to help;' and I called my good-hearted lady from the kitchen. She put on her coat and went out, leaving Jack

and me alone. We had a quiet talk. He told me that his sister was a Somerset girl, who went to be a shop-assistant in London. There her beauty attracted the attention of a well-known young man about town. The result was shame. To save the family name and help the girl—as he said—he paid her fare to Canada, giving her a hundred pounds to see her through. She was afraid to tell her parents, and so she had thrown herself on the mercy of her brother, who, fortunately, was a great gentleman and a good Samaritan.

‘If he was here, I would shoot him,’ the young man declared.

‘He is not worth shooting, Jack. That man, I feel, will have a sorry ending,’ I replied. Strange to say, he did; he broke his neck in the hunting-field. But he left us with a problem. However, my good wife did her part; the doctor helped too. There came a baby boy, who, though ushered into the world with shame, lived to be a joy to his mother and an honour to Canada. But for many a day Marjory went about with her head low. Yet she was more sinned against than sinning. Time did dispel the gloom and she became more cheerful, though still subdued. With her

hands she turned her brother's shack into a bright and cheerful home.

Women being scarce in our community, Marjory naturally was much sought after. The call of love is in the hearts of the young. There were two suitors. One was Hans, a fine handsome Norwegian, like a Viking when he walked, and in his life as clean as the brook. Hans was so simple, so peasant-like. This girl he worshipped as a queen. In all my life I have never seen such a touching idyll of love. The other suitor was 'Pretty Jim,' as the girls called him. Jim was a fool and a ne'er-do-well. He could never make good. He was an idler and a philanderer. But he had a way with him. It seemed to all of us that Marjory was again going to make a blunder in her life. Marriage with such a hopeless man as Jim would have been a financial and domestic disaster. My wife and I were worried about the business, for Marjory, impressionable as she was, had un-failing charm; all she required was a good steady husband.

It was the modesty of Hans which prevented him being the hero—for a time. Love to him was so tender and fragile. He looked at Marjory from a distance. He

idolised her. He idealised all her ways. But the other fellow was making love all the time. And then came the thunderbolt. Marjory had promised to marry Jim—according to the rumours of the township.

‘If you don’t stop that marriage, I will,’ my wife said to me.

‘My dear,’ I said, ‘it is a very delicate thing to interfere with a girl’s affairs.’

‘You’re the minister; it’s up to you. Do something,’ was the business-like reply.

It was not often that my wife commanded me. She was quite right in this case. The matter was distasteful and distressing. But I put on my hat, mounted the old gray mare, and rode over to Jack’s farm. Fortunately Marjory was alone.

‘Is it true, Marjory?’ I said, on going into the shack.

‘It is, and it isn’t,’ was her strange reply.

‘That’s a queer situation.’

‘Yes, but Jim is so persistent. He has been asking me for months. I have said “No” a hundred times. The other night he was at it again, and seeing Hans along with Nelly Crawford, I just said “Yes.”’

‘Oh, that’s the way of it;’ and I smiled.

‘That’s the right story,’ declared Marjory.

‘But he’ll expect you to marry him now.’

‘I really don’t mean to, but I thought—I thought——’ and then she started to cry.

‘Tell me all,’ I said kindly.

‘I thought it would bring Hans over to me. He’s so nice, and I love him so much.’

‘Why didn’t you come and tell my wife about it? We know Hans.’

‘It seemed so silly,’ was her reply.

‘Hans, you know, is so shy. He thinks you are a queen.’

‘I wish he wouldn’t think so much; and why was he with Nelly Crawford?’

‘You are a foolish girl, Marjory. Nelly Crawford is going to marry his brother. When you saw them they were going down to a family party. You’ve been in London. You ought to have more sense.’

‘I’m silly, I know. But I love him. I want him. Why doesn’t *he* come and ask me?’

‘I will see about that, Marjory. Meantime you will have to explain your promise to the other gentleman.’

‘There’s no need of explanation,’ said Jack, her brother, coming into the shack at that moment, looking a little excited.

‘Why, Jack?’ she inquired.

‘I’ve just punched his head; he’s beat it—

gone to Toronto.' Turning to Marjory, he said rather harshly, 'I hope that will be a lesson to you.'

'Steady, Jack,' I whispered.

'I'm sorry, sir, but we have had a lot of worry, as you know;' and he sat down.

'Say, Jack, if Hans were to come along now, would you feel worried?'

'Not a bit. He's a friend of mine. He could look after her, and be good to her.'

'That's good news, anyhow,' I concluded, going out of the door.

I mounted the old mare and made straight for Hans's farm. I found him at home, and what a beautiful home! His parents were good-class Norwegians and magnificent farmers.

'Say, Hans,' I shouted.

'Yes, boss.'

'You're the slowest chump between Halifax and Toronto.'

'Why?'

'There's a girl over there been crying her eyes out for months for you. And you keep walking about like a poet in the clouds.'

'Haven't a ghost of a chance. She's going to marry Jim,' was his sad reply.

'She isn't.'

‘Oh!’ and he dropped the bucket out of his hand.

‘That’s true.’

‘I don’t get you.’

‘Jim has fled; her brother gave him a hiding. Anyhow, she didn’t want to marry him.’

‘Who is it?’

‘You ought to know.’

‘Gee! I’ve got you now, Parson. I’m a chump, right enough.’

Before I could stop him he was on the back of my old mare and galloping like a madman down the road. I smiled all the way home, but it was midnight before the horse was brought back.

‘Well?’ I said, on opening the door.

‘Will you marry us in a fortnight?’

‘Certainly, Hans.’

‘That’s good. I shall never forget you. Thanks, boss—thanks;’ and he almost broke the bones in my hand.

Marjory’s married life was a joy to behold.

Now, in the Bible it says, ‘Cast thy bread upon the waters.’ But a minister should not cast his bread in the mere hope of dividends. If it comes back, good and well.

Twenty years after I had married Hans and Marjory I was on the prairie in Saskatchewan. My congregation were most anxious to build a bigger church. Money was scarce—very scarce. We required about a thousand dollars more to complete the fund. The scheme looked like falling through. One night at the managers' meeting (I was not present) a stranger walked in and said, 'I hear you are short of a thousand dollars.'

'Yes,' replied the chairman.

'Here you are ;' and he handed the money over.

'Excuse me, friend—who are you?'

'It doesn't matter, but they call me Hans ;' and the stranger disappeared into the night. I heard afterwards that he took the night mail.

Marjory's first child is now a brilliant doctor in New York.

CHAPTER V.

TO THE PRAIRIE.

IN Canada movement is ever westward, and from this movement Eastern Canada has suffered. It is no one's fault; it is the witchery of the prairie. Nevertheless, it is a sad thing to the old-timers of Prince Edward Island, Pictou, Glengarry, Bruce County, and other old settlements to see youth uprooting historic stakes and beating the trail to the west. But this must go on; it is Nature's law. In time, when the prairie has had its fill of men and the mad adventures of real-estate boosters, the flow will be checked and the east will come again. To the man from home the east has the attractions of home—close settlements, trees, and hills; but the west spells fortune, romance, and danger—these things will ever call the brave.

Out here a minister must follow the trail. Where pioneers go he must pursue, if he would be true to the Church. Ministers

too have the wanderlust. No Canadian is happy until he has been west of Winnipeg. The east is always talking about the west, the west blowing off hot air about the east. The nearest and most complete analogy is to say the west is Scotland, the east England; both joined by law, but separated by temperament, economic needs, and political necessities. Statesmen loyally work to bridge this gap, but so long as the westerner believes the easterner to be a parasite, and the easterner holds to the view that the westerner is a chump in jeans, we shall have that same old war which, as you know, exists between Glasgow and Edinburgh, Oxford and Cambridge, Sydney and Melbourne.

I had seen my eastern township through the troubles of pioneering; built a church and a little manse, gathered a good flock and fine body of elders. My conscience was easy, so I said good-bye, shipped a brand-new Scots Grey horse called 'Jimmy' on the freight train, lifted my good wife and little bairns into a colonist car, and 'beat it' to the west. My destination was Bunkers Bluff, in Saskatchewan. The train was a colonists' train and was packed with emigrants. It was a joy to walk through the

carriages and listen to the soft accents of the Hebrides, the polished tones of Inverness, the musical lilt of Midlothian, good doric of the Clyde, as well as the tongues of those who came from Dorset, Devon, Wilts, Kent, and Northumberland. Here and there were Poles, Finns, Norwegians, and Germans. All had but a little bundle for the shoulder, but their hearts were good, their hopes were high.

Sitting down in a corner, I smoked and dreamed. Here we were gathering the cream of the Old World. If only we could kill the grog-shop, smash the dope merchant, restrain the lures of Mammon, and work for all that is high and pure, then Canada would early see the Golden Age. But my dreams were shattered by a little Jew, who thrust apples, ice-cream cones, and chocolates under my nose. The cosmopolitan peril had surely arrived. Israel is good in parts; but Israel usually works for Israel, not for Canada. 'No!' I yelled at him. He fled down the car.

From Toronto to Winnipeg the journey is dreary. Rocks, roots, bush, sloughs, a few tepees and lumber-camps, and over all the silence of immaturity. But after Winnipeg one meets the rolling plains. There are men

who find the broad expanse very dreary, but from the first I gripped the witchery. These lands were pregnant with hope, wealth, power, and good. In a flash I saw the cure for the congestion of the Old World. There was room for millions; there was food; there were homes for all. As we passed the Red River Settlement my thoughts were turned to the Highland clearances, when men were displaced for sheep, and in the Red River found a new and better home. The old church of Kildonan still stands, fruitful of noble memories, surrounded with headstones of men born in the glens that were so dear, the glens for which they and theirs had fought in the '45, at Fontenoy, the Nile, Lucknow, and Cawnpore. The names of merchants, farms, and stations perpetuated the Highland Host. And yet as I thought of the success that was ours, my heart also beat a mournful tune. What is wealth? What is fame compared with the magic of the glen?

A minister entering a new parish in the Old Country does so in pomp and surrounded with evidence of pressing hospitality. But in the West ceremony is relegated to the background. All are so busy: there is so

much to do, and only six months to do most of it. Eastern Canada had stripped me of much of my hauteur, vanity, and belief in patronage. Though at heart I was still a Tory of the counties, at times a proud and insular snob, experience had given me the outward garb of rough and ready democracy and prepared me to eat my meat where I found it, and starve, if need be, till my meat arrived. Still, when the train pulled up at night at Bunkers Bluff I found a good Highlander, Colin Cameron, bearded, strong, rough, but kind. 'Wass you the minister?' he inquired.

'Yes.'

'My name is Colin Cameron, and I am so glad to meet you. I cannot take you to my home, for it is twenty miles from here, but I have got a room for you at the hotel. I wass told that you were in the Scots Greys, so I said to Flora that I must come to meet you. And this is your lady?' he added, with a dignity that touched me. 'I am so proud to meet a lady from home. And such fine children. Why, it is chust goot to see you all. But it is cold, and you must be hungry. I will take your bags. The hotel is chust down the road.'

We walloped through the deep mud on

to a wooden side-walk, and stumbled past wooden shacks to a corner house, which was the hotel. The parlour was filled with tough-looking guys—teamsters, hired men, drummers, tipplers, all chewing cheap cigars, spitting in brass spittoons, and settling every cause from that of Malthus to Prohibition.

‘In the dining-room,’ was the off-handed reply of the saloon boss, pointing to a rickety fly-catching door. The boss apparently had not much use for ministers. However, the meal was good, Colin Cameron kindly and amusing. An hour later Colin went home, and we went to bed in a room that smelt of beer and bad tobacco.

I was up at dawn to survey my parish. Making my good wife and bairnies a cup of tea on our Primus stove, and giving all a piece of apple-pie, I left them to rest, and went out to spy the land. My good gray horse had arrived with the freight-train. After a drink and a meal I got on his back and wandered about. The township had only two streets, running north to south, east to west. At the south end was the station of the C.P.R.; the other three ends opened out to the wide prairie. The streets

were ridged and humped with mud. Pools lay in the lower parts. Old tin cans and refuse disfigured the highway. The one-storey wooden houses were just the kind you see in the pictures. Frost had affected the foundations of some, and these leaned against other houses or the telegraph poles, in the style of a man who has dined not wisely but too well. Along the sides of the streets ran wooden side-walks, a tremendous innovation, which had been heralded in with a full page of publicity from *The Bunkers Bluff Herald*, a one-page paper printed for Society. There was a bank, two Chinese restaurants, four or five stores, a livery stable, odd little shops, and, of course, half-a-dozen real-estate agents, who were willing to sell anything from corner lots to mythical gardens in the Arctic regions.

At the end of the town I saw a small dilapidated sort of hall. On the door was printed:

<p>BUNKERS BLUFF PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. ALL WELCOME.</p>
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Next door to the church was a most awful-looking shack, which seemed to be suffering from dropsy at the sides and eczema in the iron roof. The garden was a cross between a midden and a dust-heap. An old cow wandered about. Here and there were some sun-burnt pages of *Chambers's Journal*, *Blackwood's*, *British Weekly*, *People's Journal*, and the *Oban Times*. Of all the places I had ever seen this was the least inspiring. On the gate was painted:

PRESBYTERIAN MANSE.

My wife, I knew, would be out of bed in an hour. Her native curiosity would bring her out. If she saw this awful mess she might give up the ghost. So I tied the horse to the door of the kirk, found an old shovel, and worked for a good hour cleaning up. When I had gathered the rubbish I set it on fire.

'New minister, eh?' said a voice behind me.

'Yes,' I said, turning and viewing a Chinaman.

'Likee work?' and he grinned.

'No,' I replied.

‘Plentee work Bunkers Bluff. Devil bad. God no’ here. . . . You likee clothes washed. Me laundryman Sing Chong. Wing Soo no good. Me velly good laundryman. Washee your dlawers, eh?’

‘Go away,’ I said.

‘Ta-ta, God,’ he said, in his muddled way. With difficulty I refrained from laughing at his unconscious and irreverent humour.

A highly sensitive minister reading this in a manse at home might shudder at such a manse and such a poor church. But the Canadian minister, used to the prairies, would hail this with gladness, for the plain reason that there *was* a church, there *was* a manse. For small mercies I am always thankful. It would be quite easy for me to sit down and give ‘The Bonnie Brier Bush’ touch to the prairie. Such would be untrue, and therefore valueless. Life is real: realities are often jarring, but if men will but conquer circumstances the road to Heaven is more plain. As the Americans say, we ministers have got to get down to brass tacks. It was hard on my wife, hard on my bairns, hard on me too; but what are hardships when all have health, hope, comradeship, and love? Frankly, there is

too much talk about work these days. And do not forget that I am writing about life on the prairie twenty-five years ago.

‘It’s no’ bonnie,’ said my wife, on arriving.

‘Never mind, lassie, we’ll make it bonnie.’

‘We’ll try, anyway,’ was her reply.

‘Thank you, Margaret;’ and I kissed her at the door. With such a wife life was never hard. But I wonder . . . I wonder if Canadians *know* the self-sacrifice of the women of the manse. For two hundred years these brave women have been toiling. The climate is harder on women than men. Men flourish in Canada; women often get pale and tired. Servants in those days could not be found. When the manse was cleaned, other houses had to be cleaned, for the sick must be tended. When the doctor could not come, the minister’s wife had to bring the little babies into the world. When fever was raging in a lonely settlement, the minister’s wife had to lead the work of succour. When remittance-men, diseased, in rags, were scorned by all and left to die in a hole or a stable, it was the minister’s wife who cooled the brow of the outcasts. I am tired of the glorification of vulgar wealth, sick of those brass bands which announce the

heroism of land-sharks and grafters. It was the good plain folks who made this Canada of ours. In the humble homes of east and west are the children of heroes. Certainly we owe much to Macdonald, Laurier, Strathcona, Sandford Fleming; but not all. And to-day, as I look at my kind good wife, old yet young, gray yet blonde, tired yet willing, I am impelled by the very hand of God to record the nobility of her and her kind, who in Canada and at home have, like the wise virgins, kept the lamps burning brightly.

And so we started on the prairie, started in the fall of the year, when the wind had a snap in it, but high in the heavens the sun was shining. The air was crisp and wonderful. In these high altitudes one's vitality is beyond description. No matter how poor, how hopeless the outlook, one wakes at the dawn with a song in the heart. This is true, as all Canadians and Americans know. Like the lark we salute the dawn, and through the long day there is a vim and a lightness of step which carry one through trouble and toil. In London magazines one often sees articles by fools on the joy of life, written by those cheap journalists with ten-cent brains, cynical

souls, and shattered bodies. They write their cheap rubbish about 'brighter' London, ever invoking their readers to push on with night clubs, dance suppers, and all the piffle of an effete civilisation. I should not scorn them, but is pity any use? Is it not a fearful thing to think that millions are being daily inoculated with the stuff that maddens? Am I too hard? Has this western country made me intolerant of the tired Old World? I wonder . . . I wonder!

Behind my coming to Bunkers Bluff was a very sad story. It was the story of a young minister who could not make good. To me it was a painful episode in the history of the Church. Young Donald —— had come from the Old Country with high credentials. He was a good scholar, a sweet-souled youth. In following the western trail he was following the gleam. But he was studious, shy, nervous, and shocked with the newness and rudeness of things. From the cloisters he had tumbled into the backwash of pioneering. He took short views; only saw stumps, never the trees. He cared not for horses, wagons, or sleighs; he was afraid of 40 below, and was

haunted with the cry of the wolf, which, by the way, is really a coward of the animal world, except when hungry. Donald was made for a quiet old manse where he could have browsed on Hebrew and Greek, for he was distinguished in his way.

But he *did* try. He moved his congregation to build a church of a kind, a bit of a manse. He established the routine of God, but failed to drive home the spirit. The reason was incompatibility of temperament. He was not of the New World. He often argued where he should have ordered. In Canada there are times to plead, times when a minister must drive. This young man's idealism was rich and eloquent, but he could not co-operate with men or even compel, as some can, the carrying out of dreams. He made a frontal attack on the Saloon Boss, instead of smothering the devilry of that boss with practical Christian organisation. He brought a distinguished temperance divine to lecture, but caved in and cancelled the meeting when told to do so by Jack Gruff, the Political Boss. If he had only risked his body and reputation that night he would have found the Political Boss marooned. And with his elders he argued about trifles and conceded rights ever sacred

to the cloth. Result was chaos. And the Political Boss worked the wires to drive him out. The boss really feared him, for he knew that if Donald could once get his feet he could make the prairie hum.

‘I’m sorry, laddie, but you’ll no’ do,’ was the message of Colin Cameron, the ruling elder.

‘I’m doing my best,’ was Donald’s reply.

‘Ay, but you cannae fit in.’

‘That means I must go.’

‘For the sake of the Church; mebbe for your own good too. I wass sorry to bring this message to you.’

Donald sat down crushed, speechless. And the really kind old elder left him to think things out. To a young man in his first church it was a fearful blow. But the sneer on the faces of his enemies and unbelievers as he left the town touched his pride. He determined to try again.

I am pleased to add that in another land he has made good, indeed a brilliant success.

The Political Boss was duly punished, as you shall see.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEVIL HIMSEL'.

COMPARED with my induction into my old Ayrshire parish, the ceremony in Bunkers Bluff was a poor affair. Comparisons, however, are odious. This was a new settlement. Within a radius of fifty miles there were then only four hundred souls. In Canada one never expects large congregations, except in the cities. The first meeting totalled fifteen, but they *were* kind to me and mine. In that rickety old shanty we sang the Auld Hundred with the same joy as they did at the old hill conventicles. During the singing I noticed how fervour and pride made these humble folks look like patriarchs of old. While I prayed for help in the long hard days before us, faith in the God of our fathers, hope for the joy and love to come, there was heard here and there, what one seldom hears in a solemn Presbyterian congregation—a fine honest ‘Amen.’ Doubtless their hearts were

sore with the troubles about the young minister who had gone. Their worries with the land, the homesteads, and finances, were also severe, and maybe my Scots inflexion had wafted them back to the hills and glens. Whatever it was, I felt that God's seed would not fall on stony ground.

'It wass my place,' said Colin Cameron at the 'social' which followed, 'to say a kind word o' welcome. We haf been lucky to get a kind man for a minister. He has brought a lady who comes from Home, and his little children will be sunshine to us all. But I was thinkin' the manse wass a very poor place. It is not nice at all. When we get a goot man we must keep him. The managers have bought a load of wood. If all the good friends will lend a hand we shall make the manse bigger. I would not like to think that a gentleman from the Scots Greys would have to spend his life in the manse as it is now. So I will chust take a show of hands of those who will give their labour.'

All hands went up.

'Thank you, friends. That is the best welcome we can give our minister;' and he sat down.

I was touched to the heart. It was a

beautiful spirit they had shown. Once again I had found in the most unlikely place that generosity which smooths a poor minister's path. Next day the wood arrived. For a fortnight we laboured together. At the end we had a fine six-roomed manse, a good stove, water-tank, stable, also fuel to last the whole winter through. For such a congregation one really had to do one's best. The township is to-day a great and prosperous one, with two other denominations at work, but I started here all on my own. My congregation consisted of Scots, English, Irish, Norwegian, German, and Russian farmers. A strange mixture, but most interesting.

On the back of my faithful 'Jimmy' I started a round of visits. The saddle again! How useful my training as a cavalry officer was going to prove. I became not only the minister, but the postman, the news bringer, medicine-man and veterinary surgeon. When I went out on those visits I had always to stick in my saddle-bag a bottle of linseed oil and a couple of colic drinks, to attend to the cows and calves that were in pain.

There are many roads to heaven, many ways to lure men into the kirk. For

example, the first time I visited the sod shack of Jack Dawson, I got only a grunt and a shut door; but, finding a cow in agony in his barn, I sat through a long cold night, working away with linseed oil, colic drinks, hot mash and blankets. My labours were rewarded; the cow was saved.

‘Say, boss,’ said Jack, ‘I’ve never seed a parson that could mend a cow. I never knew a man that helped a guy when he got the door banged on his nose. But I guess you’re a good cove. I ain’t much use in the God business, for I’m a rough American, but by Gee! me, the missus and them kids is going to sing halleluyah in your old shanty in town. Shake!’ and he put out his hand.

It was most interesting to watch day by day the progress of the people. At the station I would find new arrivals, tired, overawed and, for the moment, helpless. All they had was their bags, a few dollars, and the number of the homestead and the section. Colin Cameron and my good friends somehow managed to get enough funds to give the emigrants a meal. Assembling them in borrowed wagons, I would then lead them out to the promised land. These were great

moments in my life. In my youth I had dreamed of leading the Scots Greys through a wild and glorious charge, but this was a nobler task. We had to go many many miles, with only the compass for a guide. On arrival we had to start hunting for the metal discs (numbered) which the surveyors had left behind to mark the homesteads and sections. Of course the emigrants only came in the spring. It was no hardship to sleep out. In a short time a home was made out of sods, which we called the sod shack. The earth was beaten to give a hard floor. A hole was left for the smoke of the fire. Another hole made a window. A newspaper did for a table. The biscuit-box was the first cooking-range. Bully beef-tins stood for kettles and pots. Where there were no trees fuel was made out of sun-dried manure. From the slough came water. Providence somehow furnished a little tea and flour. There were jack-rabbits to shoot for dinner. And so new homesteads were born.

The prairie to-day is too tame for me. Those wonderful times with the early settlers were so thrilling. It was a fascinating job dumping down new parishioners in odd spots on and off the map. It was more

fascinating watching the homesteads grow. The wise man went straight for a crop; the foolish one worried about the house. The Scotsman would ask, 'Hoo many bushels tae the acre?' The Englishman often inquired for the nearest hotel. But the foreigner just dug a hole, flung in his gear, and commenced to make money by snaring the prairie chickens. As for the women, I was often sorry for them. It was no promised land for many a day. They had to live in the old sod shack, bear their children too, suffer untold hardships, until good crops enabled the men to buy a nice wooden house, cooking range, water pipe, fly screens, and a bath. To-day the majority of these women are riding around in Ford cars.

Removed as we then were from direct contact with the law, medicine, and culture, a minister who loved his people had at times to be an autocrat. Once I found on a German's homestead a cow in the last stages of consumption; its udder was covered with open sores, yet the woman was milking it and giving the milk to her children. They were hard-working but ignorant people. A cow was a cow, but that cow would, in time, have destroyed the family and spread disease throughout the settlement. Argument was

useless. I shot the cow, and stood over the man while he dug a pit. When he had thrown the carcase in I spread over the body a bucket of raw lime. As I rode away I heard volley after volley of fearful oaths. The man and the woman cursed me to all eternity. They stayed away from church; they stopped two other families from coming to church. Still, I did not despair. Patience was my great weapon; kindness an infallible remedy. One day when riding along the trail I heard a man galloping behind me.

‘Boss! Boss!’ shouted Herman the German.

‘Yes?’ I said, pulling up.

‘My wife dying . . . bad . . . very bad. Got no medicine. You help me?’ he inquired.

‘Certainly,’ I answered, turning round and riding to his farm.

I found the woman in bed; she was fevered, had a headache, and was vomiting. With all solemnity I opened my medicine case, made up a draught, gave it to her, and told the husband to let me know how she was next day. With a smile I departed.

About 7 A.M. next morning Herman knocked at my door.

‘Hello, Herman,’ I said.

‘She’s saved, boss. . . . You good man. . . . I gif you presents;’ and he handed me two fat hens and a couple of pounds of butter. ‘We come to church next Sunday, boss,’ he concluded as he departed.

I closed the door and smiled.

‘Why are you smiling?’ my wife inquired.

‘At the medicine.’

‘What was it?’

‘Two tablespoonfuls of Epsom Salts.’

The most superstitious family I ever met was a group of Macleans from the Islands. They were very old-fashioned, and saw the devil in all sorts of shapes. To understand all this I closely studied Campbell’s book on the legends and superstitions of the Highlands. After reading that I had a certain sympathy with the Macleans. The younger folks were not so bad, but old Donald solemnly declared to me that the devil himself had stolen a calf, eaten a dozen hens, and was waitin’ to pu’ him into hell. Would I no’ offer up a prayer? Well, I did pray; for after all Donald believed what he told me. But after I had prayed I went down to another farm and borrowed two

wolf - hounds ; these I brought back to Donald's farm.

'Whateffer are you goin' to do, at all?' he inquired.

'I'm going to kill the devil, Donald.'

'Wass that possible?'

'With your devil, yes.'

'But I think it's the same one that frightened the men of Coll, Tiree, Morven, and all the crofters in the Hebrides.'

'Perhaps it is; but will you kill a calf?'

'That wass expensive. Would a hen or a rabbit not do?'

'Not so well.' The devil, I insisted during a long harangue, was appeased only by a hefty offering. It must be a calf, or I would go home.

'But is it safe to hunt the devil himsel'?' persisted Donald.

'We must take a chance,' was my answer.

'Then I will kill the calf,' he decided.

I took the dead calf, just as night was falling, and laid it out on the open prairie on the track from the poplar bluff in which 'the devil himsel'' resided. Keeping the hounds in leash, I led my horse into a dip of the ground and waited. The moon came up after a time, making the coming task comparatively easy. Donald, so I was told,

went to bed and pulled the blanket over his head. But the young Macleans waited anxiously behind the barn.

At last the devil came forth, accompanied by his lady, great big powerful creatures with fox-like heads. They soon picked up the scent of the calf, and tracked it; then with grunts of glee proceeded to make a good meal. All the time the hounds were straining madly at the leash; fortunately, being a bit of a deer-stalker, I had taken post with the wind blowing in my direction. At last I let them go; they were clever dogs, silent as cats. Mounting my horse, I followed. Then commenced the hunt. The hounds had all but reached the busy wolves, when the noise of rushing feet caught the marauders' ears. They looked round, then bolted to the open prairie. Urging my horse to a full gallop, I encouraged the hounds with a tally-ho. My word! they did go, but so did the devil and his wife. The good meal, however, was playing its part. Their steps began to lag, the hounds gained on them, then I saw the wolves turn for the inevitable combat. Wolf-hounds never shirk such a task. Straight at the throats of the enemy they went; in ten minutes the wolves were dead. I flung

the carcasses over the back of the horse, and went back to Maclean's farm. Knocking at the door, I cried, 'Donald . . . Donald.'

'What?' he roared from his bed.

'Here's the devil; he's dead.'

He opened the door; he was in his night-shirt. 'That's not the devil, that's only his "dogs,"' and he banged the door and jumped into bed again. The young Macleans laughed. For many a day we kept up the story about 'the devil.' In time, Donald, seeing no evidence of his satanic majesty, believed that the evil spirit which had haunted the Highlands and Islands had forever been slain. But if you would understand the origin of superstition and suspicion in the Highland host, I would suggest reading Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*.

From the foregoing it will be seen that my life was one of action rather than of studious reflection. To me that is the great charm of ministerial life on the prairie. And I often wonder why the churches at home cannot inspire more young men to come out and take their share of the ministry. There is no money in it. At times we live from hand to

mouth, but somehow God provides. I and others have found joy in the task, but a formalist and conventionalist should never attempt this life. And the lover of the orthodox, the seal-pattern sermon (by that I mean the old-fashioned and laboured exposition of the gospels), will find his audience impatient, if not unable to do as they do at home—watch, Sunday by Sunday, the minister wrestling with time-honoured controversies which can be found from Genesis to Revelations. Knowing the Book is a grand thing, but out here experience has compelled almost all prairie ministers to abolish the sermon and simply have an honest talk from the pulpit. I agree this would not suit the more cultured audiences of the Old World. But the prairie folk are simple folk; they labour long and hard; their difficulties are many, though the rewards are high. So we regard them as our children and speak as a father would.

But the Sunday talk need not be an empty affair. From the fields, the flowers, even a neglected horse, we can always draw a moral. One can be so friendly and intimate. A kindly word can be dropped about the sad misfortunes of Bill Jones,

the honest hopes of Jim Brown, and the need of looking in on Jack Thomson or Willie Green, who are in trouble from hail, blowing, or fire. The congregation can be linked into a brotherhood. All the homely jests of Chalmers, Spurgeon, 'Norman,' Emerson, and other great divines can be used to fortify them in anguish or defeat. Their own virtues may be extolled, and so they may be encouraged to vanquish their sins. Through pleasant anecdotes of their own dear bairns one can lure them on to memorise and idealise 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' In such talks I feel the glory of the ministry. We are man to man; heart to heart. Despite what superficial novelists write about the prairie folks, I do feel that with all their imperfections they are God's children, and finer subjects of this empire than those who ape the nob, play the snob, and curse the mob. There is no rigid class distinction, but there is, in the best parts, an aristocracy of character. The strong man wins at times, but on the whole, as in Auchtermuchty, Cawnpore, or Timbuctoo, goodness triumphs, humility is powerful, and sincerity always sure. That's why I love the prairie and the prairie folk. .

CHAPTER VII.

THE AMERICAN CRUSADER.

EXAMPLE is always useful. At the start this town was depressing. Main Street was merely a line of queer-looking shacks built for the day and not the future. Mammon at times seemed overwhelming. Beauty, art, literature and philosophy were hard to find. Men and women, somehow, were quite content to plod along in the rude pioneering way. For my own comfort, as well as to give a lead, I enclosed the manse with a belt of Russian poplars and Scots fir trees. By hard work I created a lawn. Around the lawn was made a border of flowers. In a corner of the front garden a cosy summer-house was erected. Thus we in our own little way repelled the baldness of the prairie, quelled the careless savage, and roused a love of the beautiful as well as the thought that we were here for more than a day. Throughout the West, even to-day, one always discovers in buildings, fences, and business arrange-

ments the lack of permanence, the spirit of restless nomads.

Main Street, bald, muddy, with its dilapidated side-walks, offensive buildings, and ghastly advertisements for bad baccy, bad booze, peanuts, and paraffin oil, was always an eyesore to me. Vulgarità was the striking note. The appeal of the advertiser was always to the primitive, the base, the material side of life. The drummers (commercial travellers), who came in their standardised suits, distributed the belief that life was merely a game, dollars the main thing, and beauty the maudlin mush of long-haired holy rollers. One must admit that concentration on results has given to the whole American continent a material prosperity which is striking. It has put into the pockets of the poor a fairer share of wealth. Generally speaking, there was and is no pauperdom such as one sees in the Old World. But the Lord never intended prairie towns to be without religion, art, books, trees, gardens, and beautiful flowers.

When I first started to preach the need of beauty the Political Boss characterised this as 'the uplift of a ten-cent gospel babbler.' I made no reply. Instead, I

went to a few friends, who gave me the money to buy two hundred young trees. During a week-end when the Political Boss was incapacitated with the effects of fire-water, twenty faithful stalwarts planted the streets of Bunkers Bluff with trees. When he looked out of his shack he was moved to wrath and anger. Seizing a saw, he rushed out to kill the dreams of the uplifters, but patrolling the street was a handsome young trooper in his red coat, a mounted gentleman of the North-West Police. The saw fell out of the Political Boss's hand, his face paled; he realised that beauty had won. I smiled, and went on with my digging.

The next step in the work of humanising was a library. Then, as now, the weekly dose of reading-matter was the concentrated essence of picturesque villainy, alluring infidelity, and yards of nauseous fiction glorifying supermen with rat-trap jaws, burning eyes, and ponderous abdomens decorated with gold alberts. Journalism was not a profession, merely a side-line to slip into commerce. Papers were slapped up like pounds of margarine. Originality was scarce. Scissors and paste saved such a lot of bother. Few, very few, had heard

of Emerson, Longfellow, Dickens, James, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Kipling, Hardy, Conrad, or other masters of style. Education then was so primitive that only the superficial was understood. So my faithful band of helpers were inspired to build a rest-room for the farmers and their wives, and therein instal a library, The obstructionists were alarmed.

‘Say, Jack,’ said the Saloon Boss to the Political Boss, ‘I guess them ten-cent gospel-chewers are putting it over this town alright. Gee! I like their darned cheek, saying that poets are better than boose. That Scotch parson wants to put the blinkers on this town. I heard Tom Dawson’s kids singing in my back yard “Jesus bids us shine.” If that ain’t interfering with the liberty o’ the subject, then I’ll eat my hat. If a man ain’t goin’ to have the freedom to chew baccy and have his boose, then it’s time we cut our throats.’

‘I guess so too,’ said the Political Boss.

‘Better call a meeting of the boys,’ suggested the Saloon Boss.

‘I’ll figure it out,’ was the non-committal answer of the Political Boss, who was beginning to feel the draught of a decent public opinion. Unlike the young minister,

I never made a direct assault on this boss, never replied to his cynical harangues in the *Bunkers Bluff Herald*. When I met him I was studiously polite. Between him and me was erected an invisible but insurmountable barrier of courtesy and organised civility. My life was such that he could never catch me with a bottle of fire-water, or committing a social indiscretion. At the annual race meetings cavalry training enabled my good and faithful Jimmy to beat every crooked horse and rider he brought in to twist the betting. Physical punishment from his hands was a doubtful proposition; he was five feet eight, fat, and out of condition; I was six feet, hard bitten, and always in the saddle. These things I write out of no vain whim, but merely to illustrate how tremendously difficult it is for the unscrupulous to put it over one who determines to justify idealism. Need I add that my mischievous side got a tremendous amount of fun out of the game.

The Rest-Room was built. In it we placed a big warm stove. Along the walls we fixed the shelves for books. On a wet or cold winter day the farmers and their children had a home in town. Instead of shivering in the streets, or getting asphyxiated in

the saloon bar, here they could rest, be warm, read, write, and meet friends from distant farms. We simply brushed aside all obstructionists. Our workers realised that Canada was here for all time, not a week-end. Almost all of the farming community liked a little drop of Scotch. Frankly, I see no harm in the temperate use of liquor, but it was the misuse of it that roused decent public opinion. The orgies of the townsmen had got beyond all bounds. This misuse ultimately led to Prohibition. But my aim all through has not been mere Prohibition. My belief is in conduct which springs from character. And I do think that if the Church and parents will form the minds of youth on healthy lines, there will be no need of legislative restrictions on the acts of man. As a matter of fact, I do not think men or women can be made good by Acts of Parliament. Belief in exterior and mainly artificial forces for the purification of the soul is the delusion of the bagman. All good comes from within. Good is best implanted in youth. And I am bold enough to say that if you give me twenty children for ten years, their minds can be formed so that only one or two will crumple up before the great temptations of

life. Of course it is hard work, much harder than simply passing Acts of Parliament; but there is joy in labour.

After a few years' labour on my own, reinforcements arrived in the form of a young American Methodist minister. He was a magnificent youth from Yale; one simply had to like him, but I trembled for the system of veiled neutrality which I had laboriously built up. The obstructionists were not down and out, but they were mute; they did not worry me very much then, and I had more or less freedom to carry on my work. But Paul Dewy stirred the whole community into a regular war between opposing forces.

'I guess your scheme's not bad at all,' Paul said one evening, 'but you'll be an old man before you carry out your dreams. I'll make the fireworks, you do the graceful benediction. If I get into a hole, it's up to you to pull me out.'

'What are you going to do?' I inquired.

'I've got five thousand dollars to fix up a church and a small shack for myself. When that's done I'm going bull-headed at the reactionaries in town. The short-cut isn't pleasant, but it cuts out the canker

quicker. There's need of uplift in this town. Why, the colour scheme, the bastard architecture, the mass-production doors, windows, goods, advertisement and dry-goods men make me creep. There's not enough pep, an appalling lack of originality, and a crying need for play-rooms for the kids. Those tough guys who chew and fill the spittoons in the saloon seem to have the dead hand on God, but if you'll help me I'll wipe them out.'

'Youth. . . Youth!' And I laughed heartily.

'I guess this is a young country,' was his solemn reply.

'Yes, and I'll help you; but don't forget there are times to compromise, and occasional good in diplomacy. I don't think you or any other man will clean this or any other prairie town right up, but I do think you will do a lot of good. Sound the bugle; war is declared.'

Paul built his church and shack. When that was done, he opened fire on the unbelievers by a sermon that stirred the prairie. Here are extracts:

'This ain't a bad town, but it ain't heaven. I'm not the real Paul, only a modern representative. I've been sent here

to sell the good goods of religion. Mebbe you'll misunderstand me—at first. I'm American, but I'm not on for the gospel of Fifty-Fifty that you read about in twenty-cent magazines. My mission is to fill this church with a hundred per cent. believers. Those guys that chew bad baccy and get meningitis with what Kipling would call rot-gut-fire-water have got to be given a hand. If they decline mercy, then it's up to us all to see we save the young men, young women, and kids. I'm unorthodox, I know. My scheme may look like a cheap boost. But it ain't a bit of good my quoting Hebrew or Greek in a country that deals with ploughs, binders, and elevators. The Church has got to move along modern lines. We parsons have, perforce, to use the lingo of the people. There is nothing in the Book against originality, even the slang of the multitude.

'I'm young. I'm on for good clean fun. We're going to have good baseball in this town, and no betting. We're going to have nice homes where you can hear the good old songs of home, and not those innuendoes that ain't fit for parlours. There will be a Literary Club to chew out the best of Horace, Longfellow, and O. Henry; a Dramatic Club to stage *The Pirates of*

Penzance and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; and this town, with its mass-production stoves, side-walks and refuse-heaps, has got to be changed into a garden city. This may mean a war with the bosses. Let's have the war and get it over. That good Scots parson is a friend of mine. He is in this scheme. So I say pull together, pull for the Church, pull for the Lord.'

As I walked down Main Street next morning I saw the gospel of direct action had roused the obstructionists to fury.

'Say, Jack,' said the Saloon Boss to the Political Boss, 'if we don't get busy, that Methodist chump will blow us out of this town.'

'I guess he's a hot-air merchant. I've heard that stuff before. They tried it out in Bow Creek last fall, but they only got ten converts. Shouldn't worry if I were you, Jim;' and the Political Boss walked on.

But the Saloon Boss had to worry, for within a month Paul somehow got enough money to buy the mortgage over his premises. Walking into the saloon, he announced to the boss that unless he paid up he was going to foreclose.

'You measly mound of Methodism!'

‘Cut that out, friend. In here I’m not a parson. Get right down to business. What are you going to do?’

‘You’ve got me hamstrung; I can’t pay up.’

‘Well, I’m not too hard. This is the worst and dirtiest saloon in town. I’m closing it as a licensed premises. The rooms I’m going to use as a Y.M.C.A. The bar I will turn into a shop. If you promise me right now you’ll play fair, I’ll stock it with dry goods, give you twenty dollars a week and five per cent. commission. Are you on?’

‘I’ll need to think that out,’ was the surly reply.

‘You can have a week. Meantime dry up the saloon. Good-day.’ And Paul went out.

The Saloon Boss sat down on a chair, crushed. He was fifty years old; he had a wife and family, but did not live with them. He really was the worst man in town. Starvation faced him. From his own selfish point of view he had reason to curse Paul. But Paul was a much greater gentleman than he (the Saloon Boss) imagined. Paul had also seen the man’s wife, told her that this was her husband’s

last chance to make good, and suggested she should make one more try to get him straight. Economic pressure is a hard weapon to use, but it was justified. There was a long and distressing scene in the back parlour of the saloon that night; but the woman won. Next morning Main Street was astounded to see the doors closed and a notice in the window :

CLOSED.
WILL BE OPENED
AS A DRY GOODS STORE
NEXT WEEK.

Paul Dewy gave me an insight into the other side of American character. Hitherto, like many Canadians, I was inclined to think that all things bad came from over the border. Paul, however, revealed that America had been well leavened by the good stuff that settled Pennsylvania and the New England states. In the pulpit he used the language of the people, but in our quiet half-hours one got the cultured atmo-

sphere of Boston, Philadelphia, Harvard, and Yale. Of course he was a disturbing force—there was a restlessness and a persistent measure of noise around him; but, as he explained, without that it would have been impossible to get through so much work in a short time. All of his methods were not endorsed by me, but I loved his manliness, his earnestness, his sincerity.

Paul Dewy was a living example of what a good investment religion is, if I may be permitted to speak in that way. Tall, handsome, normal; without a trace of neurosis; active and often triumphant in games; merry and witty at a social function; kind, tender, and true in those sad hours when hail, fire, or blowing destroyed the crops and the hopes of hundreds of hearts. But his expenditure of nervous force was as alarming to me as it was to my wife. He toiled like a galley slave and his work was evident. Paul created a public opinion which made it absolutely bad form for a young man not to be in the Y.M.C.A. Women in time ceased to accept the view of cheap fiction, that a hero was one who could defy the moral code and reasonable conventions. There was a tremendous impetus to the idea that the man who

bathed, played games, read good books, honoured his father and mother, and lived for the honour of his country rather than the glory of self, was one who would carry into marriage all those ideals, those sweet and pleasant dreams, which make women happy, and render love the glory of mankind.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SIX BRIDES.

AS the years rolled on improvements were seen almost daily in and around the farms. The great open spaces over which I used to gallop were gradually fenced in. The old sod shacks disappeared. Instead, one saw homes well designed, most comfortable, and pleasing to the eye. Great barns were built. In these barns much of the crop could be secured. Down below the horses and cattle were accommodated for the winter. In the up-to-date barns the animals could be fed, watered, groomed, and manure removed, without their having to go outside the doors when the weather was unsuitable. Every new barn was opened with a dance, and happy times we had christening these useful institutions. Roads, too, were fenced off and graded. In time the telephone came in, and that was the greatest benefit of all. A lonely settler, cut off on a bad day, could just lift the receiver and keep himself informed of all

the news and fun in town. All the 'phones were on the party system, which often made complications. Romeo, however, designed a language for Juliet, and the language was put into a private code in which a 'pound of sugar' was a kiss, a 'pound of honey' love, and 'two pounds of honey' a proposal of marriage. Many a good tale could be told of the prairie telephone.

Visiting became a greater pleasure. There was no need to announce my coming. The prairie is so flat that a visitor can be spotted miles away, which gives the good lady of the household time to wash her face, change her blouse, shove *Comic Cuts* under the sofa, push the gramophone below the bed, get the minister's photo in the centre of the table, the family Bible close by, and the husband warned to change his battered pants for a Sunday pair of jeans. One gladly passed the old shack in which the family fortunes had begun and stepped across a pretty veranda, through a fly-screened door, to a pretty hall which led to the public rooms. Hospitality was generous; indeed, these prairie visits often proved too much for one desiring to keep a reasonable figure. The note of happi-

ness was even greater than the note of prosperity.

‘It wass a goot country,’ said Colin Cameron to me one day when I was visiting him.

‘Yes, you have done well, Colin. Six hundred and forty acres all your own is not bad in twenty years.’

‘But it is very lonely for young men. It is not goot to see those bachelors going down to California in the winter. I am sure they will be doin’ things that are not goot at all. My three sons are men now, but there are no girls here to marry. I wass thinkin’ mebbe you could get three nice girls from the Old Country. If you could get girls that would milk a cow, make scones, churn the butter, and be godly in their habits that would be chust fine. I will give my sons 160 acres each, with a nice house for each family; that would be goot for Canada?’

‘Splendid, Colin, splendid. But it’s a risk asking strange girls out,’ I replied.

‘Mebbe it wass; but it wass just as big a risk getting my own wife, for I only saw her photograph to propose to, and she proved a fine woman to me. And if the girls are not up to the scratch I can give

them a chob on the farm. I wass thinkin' if you wrote to some parish minister at home this could be done.'

'What about the passage-money, Colin?'

'I will chust pay it now;,' and to my astonishment he pulled out a cheque, signed it, and gave it to me.

Continuing my round of visits, I was struck by the number of bachelor farms that lay on the way. Around the bachelor's shack all was disorder; around the homes where women reigned the difference was remarkable. The need of good wives was now apparent. Pioneering had passed away. It was now safe and easy to bring girls in. That day three other good bachelors opened their hearts to me. They wanted wives badly. Living alone was not good for them; in winter they grew morbid or were tempted to the saloon in the town. I told these three men of Colin's scheme. To my surprise they also handed over the passage-money of a bride-to-be. With this money and this mission I returned to the manse.

'A grand day's work,' my wife remarked, on hearing the news.

'Yes; but what about the responsibility?'

'Don't worry about that, Gordon. I'll write the letters. There's many a braw

lassie at hame will be glad o' these nice lads. We'll guarantee our lads; the ministers at home must guarantee their lassies.' So my good lady sat down that night and wrote to the wives of two parish ministers, each lady receiving the money for three passages. While my wife was writing these letters I was thinking of my old friend, the U.P. man who had served with me in Ayrshire. His daughter was now full grown, a distinguished graduate of Glasgow University, and most anxious to come to Canada. As our boys and girls in the manse were now in need of a little polish, it occurred to me that it would be a good thing to give Mary a start as a governess in our home, and thus get her used to the country. She could take charge of the six girls coming out, and so keep all in order during the journey to Canada. I mentioned the idea to my wife.

'A good idea. Mary is a nice girl, but she will not be long here, I'm thinking.' A view which suggested my wife had some little scheme in her brain about Mary.

Somehow an enterprising reporter on the staff of a local paper circulating in the parishes to which the letters had been

addressed got a hint of this scheme. For the next two months I was bombarded with cables and letters. Many were most interesting. Here are a few:

1.

DEAR SIR,—I make no claims to beauty, but I'm strong, can bake scones, make butter, and ken when a hen's no' working. My first lad died wi' neumonya; my second lad jilted me to marry the cook at the Big Hoose. So I'm lonely. I've got £50 in the Post Office Savings Bank. In my bottom drawer I've got blankets, lace curtains, ten yards of red flannelette, and four pairs o' silk stockings. My age is 28. I'm no' big, but I'm handy. I ken the Ten Commandments, but I'm no' blate at the Flooers o' Edinburgh or the Hielan' Fling.—Yours very very sincerely,

MAGGIE C——N.

2.

(*A reply-paid cable.*)

I'm forty-five, good health, fine cook, can pay passage. Can you get me a man?

JANET T——N.

3.

(*A postcard.*)

Shall be glad to know if these young men are members of the I.O.G.T.

AGNES B——N.

4.

SIR,—I am a typist in a country lawyer's office,

but I was brought up on a Dumfries-shire farm. I shall be glad to have fuller particulars about these young men, such as age, height, appearance, colour of hair and eyes, habits. (Have they loved before?) Are the houses in good condition, quite dry, water in, bath (h. & c.)? Good shops within reach of the farms, and if the conveyances owned by these men are gigs or motor-cars. I would prefer to get into communication with one who owned a car. I enclose my photograph, also birth certificate, references from three clergymen, reference from my employer, and shilling in stamps to pay postage on any photographs or correspondence sent me.—Yours truly,
PRISCILLA E——N.

‘Look what you have done for me,’ I said to my wife.

‘Men were aye cheap,’ was her quick reply.

I smiled and went on with my reading.

At this end of the world excitement was intense. The home paper had let the cat out of the bag, so old Colin Cameron was in the most excited state. Twice a day my telephone would ring.

(In the morning.)

‘Wass it rainin’ in town?’ Colin would say.

‘No, Colin.’

'I wass thinkin' it wass. . . . Have you news?'

'Only the Edmonton paper,' I would answer mischievously.

'Och! I mean from home . . . about the lassies.'

'Not yet.'

'Mebbe the mail boat's down?'

'I believe the Atlantic's stormy just now.'

'I wass reading that too. We must chust wait.' And he would hang up the receiver.

(In the evening.)

'Wass the train in?' Colin would inquire.

'Not yet, Colin.'

'I heard a noise in the sky like wheels; I wass thinkin' it wass the mail train.'

'Not yet.'

'Donald Mackay wass tellin' me, too, that a telegram came to you to-day; he saw the boy going to the manse. I wass chust wonderin' if it wass from the lassies?'

'No, it was a preaching engagement.'

'Och! . . . We must chust wait.' And up would go the receiver again.

At last came the news *and* the photographs. My word, we did feel proud of

the six nice kind-looking lassies who had been selected. Mary, our future governess, was coming too. All were sailing on the *Metagama* and would be in Bunkers Bluff in about three weeks' time. This news I 'phoned to Cameron and the other boys, but I kept back the photos, with the intention of giving all a more pleasant surprise. When the information went ringing down the trails farming operations ceased for the day. As for the prospective bridegrooms, they tore on with the work of preparation. My wife, meaning to have all in order, went out with me to see these houses for the brides. She insisted on many things, such as a water-pipe, fly-screens, clothes-pulleys, cupboards, indeed everything possible that could be secured to make nice prairie homes.

The chaff that went on was most amusing. Old Colin, ever practical, worried away at the qualifications.

'Did they know the farmin'?''

'Yes,' my wife replied.

'Wass it in black and white they could milk the coo?'

'Certainly.'

'I wass wondering, too, if they would be good at the scones, and the churning.'

'You keep wondering, Colin; but I'm no' for making marriages o' convenience. I hope there's to be love and kindness as well as qualifications in the plan?'

'I'm sorry, chust sorry to offend you, Mrs Rollow, but I'm daft since I heard the news. I will be good and kind: my boys will be good and kind too. Yes, we must not talk about the milkin', the scones, and the butter too much. If they will love my boys as I love my wife and love my Maker then all will be well, and I will not be afraid of the "Lament of Lochaber" when my time comes to go home.'

'That's nice, Colin; that's kind of you,' and my wife pressed his old hands kindly as we were leaving.

So anxious was I during the three weeks that I vowed never to have a hand in match-making again. My sleep was disturbed. I was really haunted with the thought that this scheme was foolish and might lead to deep disappointment, even tragedy. The men I could vouch for; they were the pick of my congregation; these men deserved all that was best in womankind. But they were prairie men—simple, a little rough, primitive in many things, still men, and

fine men too. How would they appeal to these girls? Would the girls be disappointed? Would the men be disappointed? Would the once joyous plan tumble like a pack of cards? My wife, however, never lost a wink of sleep. She seemed so full of the match-making, so overwhelmed with details about cupboards, kitchen-sinks, sewing-machines, and wedding-cakes that I did not unduly press my fears. One night I really had to get out of my bed for the aspirin.

‘Gordon, you’re a gloomy sceptic, always haunted with fears, instead of having faith in the future of these lassies,’ Mrs Rollow said.

‘My dear girl, you’re mebbe right.’ I put the cork in the bottle, jumped into bed, and never wavered about the girls again.

That day! Bunkers Bluff will never forget it. The train was due at 4 P.M. At 4 A.M. Colin and six bridegrooms rode into town. The barber shaved and perfumed them as they had never been done before. Again and again they asked the tailor if their new suits would do. There was only one full-length mirror in town; it was in the soft goods shop. The six bridegrooms kept going in and out of the shop all day, buying laces,

buttons, ties, any old thing to get a look into the mirror. All the other men in town stopped work. There was a queue at the barber's door. Good Stetson hats and summer suits came out. Flags came out. Main Street was lined with bunting. A brass band came down the line from Buffalo Creek. At the station the C.P.R. station-master had fixed 'Welcome' on a hoarding, hung six pairs of old slippers on a clothes-line, trimmed his beard, ironed out his old suit of jeans, and kept his breath in order by a liberal use of candies. Such virtue, such enthusiasm had never been seen before.

Meantime the six bridegrooms were duly ordered to stay in the manse, so as to avoid embarrassing the girls on the platform. Upstairs a great dormitory had been prepared for the brides, for we did not intend them to marry for a week, so as to give them time to be sure all was in order and the men to their liking. About 3.30 P.M. my wife and I went down to the station. Every man, woman, child, horse, and dog was there. The band was playing lively tunes; the air was alive with merriment. While waiting on the platform I took a shooting glance at the manse windows. Sure enough, old Colin was peeping down on the railway from

behind the blind. Others spotted him ; there was a roar of laughter, and the blind dropped.

‘It’s coming ! It’s coming !’ the station-master shouted. At last the train came into view ; the engine was decorated with flags and flowers, the gift of the C.P.R. superintendent. As the train stopped, the band played :

Here we are,

Here we are,

Here we are again, &c.

Out of the saloon stepped a most ladylike girl, so fresh and charming. Her complexion was a joy to us sunburnt prairie folk.

‘My dear Mary ;’ and my wife kissed the new governess. I shook the pretty girl by the hand. Next came the six brides. My word, I felt proud of the Old Country. Six fine strapping girls, cheeks aglow with good health, eyes sparkling with merriment, and hearts all pit-a-pat with the scene before them. There was a deafening cheer, and still more cheers. As the train went on its way fog-signals boomed, and boomed our joy ; then, taking post behind the band, the six bonnie brides marched happily, if a trifle nervously, through Main Street to the manse. Frankly, I did not know whether

I was on my head or my feet. This was the most exciting moment of my prairie life, and I was really thankful to get home. As the girls marched into our house they were smothered with confetti and beautiful flowers.

‘Oh, my bonnie lassies, I was so pleased to see the girls from home,’ said dear old Colin with evident emotion. ‘It is sixty years since I left the glen. But your eyes remind me of the doe, your cheeks of the heather, and your smile makes me think of when I was a boy. Here are six good prairie men—they will love you and guard you. It was the biggest day of their life, so before we have tea let us thank the God of our Fathers.’ We bowed low, and the old man uttered a prayer which was a poem, for it came from the heart. Then, with a smile on his handsome face, he said, ‘Come, lassies, shake the lads by the hand and sit down to the tea that the minister and his good lady have arranged.’

During the meal conversation, though slow at first, became general. A few amusing jokes from Paul Dewy kept the ball rolling well. But I was worrying about how we were going to arrange the various couples.

‘Never mind organising, Gordon,’ my good wife whispered. ‘The lads and lassies will please themselves.’ Commonsense is a great ally. My wife was a great help that night. Paul Dewy, Colin, and I were banished out-of-doors; the dining-room was turned into a dance-room. My lady was the hostess, and she made the party go. When I returned for supper at 10 P.M. all was settled, all arranged. The lads had chosen their lassies, the lassies their lads. Before the boys went home that night I asked all to join in a simple prayer, thanking the good God for the happy beginning of a glorious scheme.

Strange as it may seem, the six brides settled down to prairie life with few complaints. My wife mothered them through the early days; in time they found their feet, and their homes were a joy and inspiration to behold. All were superior to their surroundings; thus they raised the tone, enforced a high ideal of rural life. When the little prairie children came, the old trails lit with sun and gladness; one caught visions of a more noble future, and revelled in those dreams which make life sweet and hold us to the faith of our fathers.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CURATE ARRIVES.

THE town also experienced this invasion of women. Old-timers, proud of their freedom, and scorning women in the house, were a little alarmed to see girls appearing in the stores, as servants in the larger households, and one as a typist in the mayor's office. The mayor was an old-timer; he of all men was expected to stick to the tradition of 'Men only.' Here he was defying the unwritten law; then he shattered the same law by marrying the little typist. Somehow the mayor's marriage put the lid on an uncomfortable and womanless post. But with the arrival of the ladies came little cliques, and snobbery—in parts. Hitherto the men had gossiped about graft, old cows, elevators, bad baccy, and dear boose; now the ladies whispered through the fence or round the door the goings-on of Mrs Thingummy, the price of Mrs Thingummy's new hat, and why Mrs Thingummy cut Mrs Nosyparkah. Suburbia

had arrived. The old town, which used to amuse itself with horse-racing, egg-shooting, cigar-chewing and card-playing, was now being initiated into pink teas, bridge parties, At-Homes, and sprees on the lawn. My wife, infected with the disease, commenced to read the fashions. Things were surely looking up.

At this critical stage in our history in walked the Rev. Norman Winter-Winter, a curate of the Church of England, a most superior person indeed. He was so very superior that Paul Dewy and I were compelled to start wearing our reserve pair of black trousers. We had been so busy concentrating on the abolition of oath-eating men and statutes that we had lost the habit of sleeping on our trousers and having a clothes-brush in the hall. As a matter of fact, I had gone 'native' in many things. My outfit consisted of two suits, one saddle, one horse, and one indiarubber dog-collar. So the Rev. Norman Winter-Winter, fresh from Oxford, had, on first acquaintance, a tremendous pity. For Paul Dewy he had, at first, a fine scorn; he had found Paul chewing chewing-gum, which, according to the code of Oxford, was rather vile, and very bad form. Strange to say, chewing-

gum is one of the best cures for acidity of the stomach. After a meal many Canadians chew it rather than take bismuth.

I did not resent the arrival of another denomination. For the Church of England I have a great respect. A Scot, of course, cannot endorse any pretention on its part to a super-patriotism or a monopoly of the good manners; its conventions are also embarrassing to a pioneering world. But in the long story of Canada the Church of England has played a noble part. The best men came West. My good friend Bishop Lloyd had shown what a Church of England parson can do. It takes all sorts of people to make a world. The wave of emigration had brought many adherents of this church; it was only right that their clergy should follow up. My one point against the new denomination was that it ought to have come in at the start, not now, when things were easier. The curate, however, had no misgivings about his part or ours. He was an earnest High Churchman, though his methods were coloured with the tactics of the Pro-Consul. Like all Oxford men, he embraced the maxim: 'Never argue, never suggest, never explain, but rule.' Not a bad scheme amongst the Soudanese, or

in the Old World, where tradition compelled the poor to chant:

God bless the Squire and all his relations,
And keep us all in our proper stations.

But in the West, impregnated with the untutored as well as the nobler ideals of democracy, this scheme of life can be 'put over' only by a superman. The parish pump is powerful—too powerful—in Canadian towns. Jack is as good as his master. That has given success—also created bother at times. The curate saw this at the start; he became obsessed with the urgent need of a ruling class, a powerful aristocracy. For this ideal all good and cultured pioneers in Canada and America had worked and were working, but we who had borne the heat and burden of the day never put it down in bold clear print. We had ruled these prairies in a manner which seemed no rule at all. Old-timers had donned the garb of Jack and Jim. The harshness and appalling injustice of the Old World we had dropped; we retained only those good principles which would leaven with the virtues of democracy. It is a well-known fact that men of the governing classes who come to live in this country are severe in their censures of the methods of the

mandarin. Many of the emigrants to Canada, particularly those from the Highlands, were and are political refugees. They have bitter memories of the old régime. Their suspicions often caused them to misinterpret the really good actions of High Churchmen. It is the historic association of the Church of England with the governing classes which has checked the influence of that body in this western world. A curate must cease to be a policeman.

Still, my heart warmed to the curate. In Scotland I had known many good men in the Episcopal Church. The whole history of that church reveals a fine courage under distressing conditions. Foolishly they always backed the Jacobites; foolishly they opposed the Covenanters, but they did believe in their aims, and they have taken their punishment. Disestablished, and with only the goodwill of the old nobility to back them, they have worked under almost impossible financial conditions. In the dark places of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, and Aberdeen they have accomplished deeds that only need the light of publicity to restore them to the platform of popularity. One cannot ignore men like Moir, Copeland, Reid, Hill, Im Thurn, Walpole, Robberds, Campbell, &c.

And out here it would have been impertinent for any other denomination to instil into a Nonconformist congregation either the ancient feud, needful as that feud was, or, what is worse, ancient myths concerning the Church of England. This curate was not an enemy—he was an ally; he was God's servant, so we took him to our hearts.

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the Rev. Norman Winter-Winter arrived at Bunkers Bluff when the town was passing from the atmosphere of rude pioneering to the mood and mode of Suburbia. Bunkers Bluff started business with one cake of soap, one bucket, and one well. The more educated members of the community had for a long long time to be content with a weekly wash in a prairie slough. It was the glory of Bill Hoskins that he had not bathed for sixty years, and he ultimately lived to eighty-two years of age. In polite society the words 'soap,' 'bath,' and 'washing-day' were seldom mentioned. Progress, however, had raised the consumption of soap to 200 cakes per week, the most striking indication of the advance of civilisation. Thanks to Paul Dewy (but after a fierce struggle, in which he meta-

phorically laid out Jack Gruff, the Political Boss) the town was taxed for a water-supply. The first plumber who came into our community was given a public reception. He had designed our sanitary conveniences. Then came a painter; next a decent builder, who co-operated with Paul Dewy in the massacre of the architectural monstrosities of Main Street and the erection of nice shops and pretty bungalows. All the bungalows were set well back from the road, lawns were made in front, trees fringed the lawns; so beauty and shade were born. As in other towns, the swells went to the west end, the others to the east.

The mayor's wife (the little typist), aided by all the new arrivals, commenced Society. She created what was known as the One Hundred, which was composed of leading store-keepers, one of the doctors, the lawyers, and real-estate men's families. We surely had our aristocracy: alas, it was an aristocracy of dollars, and not of character. To me it was a sorry copy of Athens and Chelsea. Somehow it destroyed the wonderful bond of friendship which had existed between the old-timers. Groups appeared, and with groups a certain amount of tittle-tattle and useless gossip. The desire to shine was

greater than the desire to emulate all that was best in the great salons of good society. Wealth and not culture became the standard. The homely old tea-parties in our churches became much too tame for the One Hundred. Rab Haw's ideals ruled instead. Thus Paul, myself, and others were left alone to carry on with our 'ten-cent cookie-shines.' Fortunately the prairie folk were beyond the reach of the new scheme, so I still had my faithful friends. But Paul insisted that 'this bastard form of aristocracy must be guided through to something finer and more inspiring.' Paul, however, was too direct to accomplish this; he was an uncompromising enemy of dollar pride and dollar vulgarity. He really had enough to do. What we required was a diplomat and statesman. The Rev. Norman Winter-Winter was the man.

The ball was set a-rolling by an At-Home given by the mayoress on behalf of the bishop, the curate, and the Church of England. For a bishop many women would die; others, indeed the great majority, will surely dress for 'The Day.' Even my good and faithful spouse, so Presbyterian, so much John Knox, ordered a brand-new dress from Toronto. She explained that

she simply had to keep up our end. I smiled indulgently, but my reserve pair of breeks, well brushed, was my only concession to the One Hundred. By the way, our governess, Mary, was the real swell of the fête. Paul, who was rather friendly with Mary, was much annoyed at the attentions of the Rev. Norman Winter-Winter, who, I must say, was a good-looking and very charming personality. The bishop, a remarkable man, did the honours well. During the afternoon he went round the One Hundred and extracted the dollars for a church, a rectory, and a meeting-room. The Church of England had won the first round.

Wealth, as you know, brings fashions even in religion. The Church of England has always been a fashionable institution. How often have we seen great merchants of Glasgow strive for rank and power, and, when that was achieved, pass quietly out of the Auld Kirk and into the arms of the Episcopal Church! In America and Canada this turnover was also evident. The *nouveau riche* does not like the Church of the Covenant or Wesley's Methodist organisation. Society in our town—and I always smile when I use the word Society—hungered

for a real swell congregation. This spirit was far from the Spirit of God. It was snobbery, not religion. But it was surely wise to give them the form of worship they desired, and use a really good curate to bring about a higher ideal of living. The curate had excellent manners, his English was faultless. The One Hundred copied him. He was a lover of good books. Very quietly he trimmed away the craving for those muck-raking novels which one often finds in rough pioneering towns. A winter course of lectures on the literary masters gave them the key to the immortals. Working through the best families, he managed to demonstrate that pink teas and bridge parties need not be scandal-mongering affairs, or opportunities for fast living. Day by day he hit down the gospel of noise. The booster was just then appearing. Jack Gruff believed that the West could only be made by publicity, conventions of big noises, and sky-high advertisements proclaiming we had the goods. The Gospel of Fifty-Fifty was being hammered into all the prairie towns. The curate counter-attacked by a series of sermons on the merits of good honest labour, commercial morality, and the dignity of humility.

Jack Gruff, in a letter to the *Bunkers Bluff Herald*, said: 'This high-falutin' sob-stuff is the bosh of our effeminate curate with a ten-cent monocle, a Piccadilly voice, and all the gee-gaws of a Medicine Man of the Blackfeet Indians. He thinks that Tennyson is the key of culture, but O. Henry and Deadwood Dick suit me. He has imported the dud scheme of double-barrelled names. There are guys in the town sticking up name-plates on the sidewalks such as Johnson-Brown, Walker-Walker, and Ponsonby-Jones, all keeping in line with Winter-Winter. I guess we can get along without this antediluvian mush. And I've figured it out that unless this chump in a dog-collar is pushed out of this town Bunkers Bluff is going to be a rough-house for all the boys that like a swig of good beer and a bit of fun with the girls.'

The curate had got his marching orders. Paul and I wondered what he would do. Wisely he refrained from replying. But, realising that in our western world a political boss is part of the social system, he went to a young decent lawyer called Tomson, and said, 'You're the new Political Boss.'

'I don't follow,' said Tomson.

‘It’s like this: Jack Gruff has always tried to down the new parsons. He is not going to down me. Being a lawyer, he is not invulnerable. I have been round nearly all the business men in town, and some of the farmers. They have promised me that you will have their business if you take hold of this town and put Jack Gruff in his place.’

Next week’s *Herald* contained the following: ‘With reference to the extraordinary attack made by Jack Gruff on the curate, I desire to emphasise the opinion of decent-minded people. The West does not belong to a few, but to many. It is an open land for all who would make it a home for decent citizens. The parsons of this town have done a lot of good hard work. We have a pretty town, a well-regulated town, and more evidence of culture than many others I know. Jack Gruff represents the minority, not the majority. He has no right to order the new parson to go. Anyhow, he is not going. *Jack Gruff is a dead-letter in the history of this town.*—

(Sd.) BILL TOMSON.

This letter was followed by the gradual withdrawal of legal and real-estate business from the office of Jack Gruff. A very

harsh form of justice, and not quite the line I should have followed, for I always believed in time and the hand of God as a better corrective. Still, it was time to end a form of terrorism which had been a deadly menace to religion. In many western towns to-day there are good decent parsons rendered helpless by the tactics of such as Jack Gruff. In securing Bill Tomson the curate did a good stroke of business. Bill was a good Canadian, straight from McGill University, with very high ideals of the West, and belief in a citizenship of a cultured kind. The defeat of Jack Gruff also raised the prestige of the curate. Canadians do like a man who can make good. The curate had won; he was taken to their hearts. This proves that if a parson will only stick to his guns the community will support him.

Meantime a love affair had been developing in my own house and under my very eyes. Mary, our very charming governess, once the special friend of good Paul Dewy, had also become the friend of the curate. Two strings to her bow. My wife and I were embarrassed, for when the two men met there was a strained feeling. Had

Mary not been there, both would have been the greatest friends in the world. Mary saw in each so much good that she really did not know what to do. One day Paul was her hero; next day it would be the curate, whom we commenced to call John.

'It will no' do if she means to marry John,' my wife said one night.

'Why?'

'The daughter of a U.P. Kirk minister! Never, Gordon, never! What would her father say? I don't believe in mixing denominations.'

'I see no harm,' was my reply.

'Explain yourself.'

'If she loves John, we have no right to interfere. John is in need of a good wife.'

'So is Paul!' my wife exclaimed.

'Yes; but this is not our affair. I would much rather she married Paul. He has been here longer; he has done a lot of good hard work. He needs a nice girl to make his home comfortable; but I'm not going to interfere.'

'But what will her father say?'

'Her father will be quite pleased. I can vouch for Paul or John; the girl must please herself, but I wish she would hurry up. She is creating a barrier between these

men. I want the ministers in this town to be friends and work together.'

'You're mebbe right,' my wife said, concluding the conversation. But for many a day I worried about this awkward affair. Both were such good fellows. Still, I really wanted Paul to win. If he didn't, I knew he would leave the town, and that, to us all, would have been a fearful calamity. Then I whispered to my wife a suggestion about a real nice niece of hers in the Old Country who wanted to come to Canada.

'The very thing, Gordon. Man! why didn't you propose that before?' And she beamed.

'I'll cable now, eh?'

'Yes, sure.'

And so I cabled for Miss Jenny Macalister. Meantime, by a series of feats of diplomacy, we kept Mary from making any decision. To make sure of things, I lured the more dangerous fellow (John) on a shooting expedition to the Rockies. We went and had a real good time, bringing back bear skins and other trophies. On our arrival home we found not one pretty girl in the manse, but two. During our absence Paul had had such a good innings in the realm of Cupid that Mary had been won over;

but my cautious wife did not want to alarm the very sensitive John, so we silenced, for a time, talk about an engagement.

At the welcome feast Paul was placed alongside Mary, John found himself with pretty Jenny Macalister. Somehow the magic worked. For the next month the young couples were together. Gradually John recognised that Paul and Mary were really of one heart. In Jenny Macalister he found charms that Mary did not possess, for Jenny had a lightsome way, and a merry merry heart. Mary was of the solid type: she was more suited for the staid side of a Methodist manse. Anyhow, the good Paul, who had been such a faithful friend to me and all, secured the girl of his heart, while John was more than pleased with his charming discovery.

One day Paul and John walked into my study.

‘Dear friend,’ said Paul, putting his hand on my shoulder, ‘we have come to ask your permission.’

‘The girls are pleased, so all’s well,’ I replied.

My old heart was touched. Somehow the good God had been with me in my efforts. I wanted to keep both men in Bunkers Bluff, and I wanted their homes to be a pattern for all. My dreams came true.

CHAPTER X.

THE CALL OF HOME.

DURING these years of pioneering there came now and again an opportunity to go home. We had good friends in the Old Country; often a vacant manse was spotted for our use; but, somehow, circumstances worked against the idea of a definite return. That awful craving for home is not so bad now, but there were times when the hunger was maddening. It was my wife who often inspired the longing. Coming home from a round of visits in my prairie parish, tired yet fit, hungry yet happy, for my parishioners were so pleasant to meet, I was often struck with the weariness of my better-half, especially after a very hot day. With a house to look after, four stirring children (Margaret, Grace, Ian, and Gordon), meals to cook, the sick to visit, and the choir to keep in hand, it was no wonder she was often tired. The worst days were the mail days. Letters from the old land, with a scent of the heather or the atmosphere of the hills,

were tear-compelling. Home then seemed so far; parents and friends separated by thousands of miles. Seemingly doomed for ever to live this life—fruitful of good, but oh so hard, so telling, on the woman! These were depressing hours. We were but human. Home was home. That passion, yea, that madness for the hills was awful, yet unsatisfied.

But I lingered on . . . lingered on. There was so much to do . . . so little time to do it in. Like all ministers of the Auld Kirk, I viewed this land as my parish, the people as my people, the dear little children as my very own. To the land of promise I had led the great majority. With my hands I had shown them how to make the sod shacks. My experience of horses and cattle helped them to secure the good stock essential for success. These prairie farms we had christened Waverley, Ivanhoe, Marmion, Ashestiel, Tibby Shiels, Glenfinnan, Corriecravie, Auld Lights, Hametoun, and so on. Their fortunes had been jealously guarded. Against combines and drummers we had won many a war for honest prices and a square deal. The trails were so familiar too. We got to know the dips, the holes, the badger's den, and where the little gophers were playing

mischievous with the roads. The name of almost every horse was known to me. On my prairie rides I often called these horses over to the fence: they would rub noses with my charger, and gallop side by side along the wire as we went on to the farms. Here and there were the little prairie schools, kept by brave young Canadian girls, who always helped the minister. At 9.30 A.M. one saw the teachers hoist the old Union Jack, then the bairns would sing:

O Canada! Beneath thy shining skies
May stalwart sons and gentle maidens rise,
To keep thee steadfast through the years
From east to western sea;
Our Fatherland! Our Motherland!
Our true north, strong and free!

Poor as we were in the manse, with no bank account for a rainy day, no certain future in the professions for our children, no stock of luxuries, no access to all the great books for which ministers ever hunger, there *was* (and there *is* to-day) something fascinating, compelling, yea bewitching, about this life. Men did uproot their stakes and go home. We had known several who had made money out of the land and returned to their native glens. But after a few years they came back; they had to. The prairie called and called;

they *left* their snug homes, their libraries, their bath-rooms, and all that they had pined for, and returned to the frame house, the long long trail, the golden grain, the coyote, the gopher, the badger, and the slough. Such experiences made one hesitate about going home.

But one day there came a letter with the hint of a kirk in the Land of the Mountain and the Flood. A sudden flash of home and joy leaped through our hearts. The hills . . . the hills . . . the hills were calling, for it is the hills we always miss in these long rolling plains. Just as R. L. Stevenson pined to hear the whaups cryin' ower the hills o' Gallo-way, so we longed to hear them too. From the distance we idealised the glen, the burn, the hawthorn, heather, and the broom. The but-and-ben was never so bonnie. A village kirk, a dream of peace and rustic gladness. A quiet old manse, a fit haven to end our days. There were tears in my wife's eyes; there was something knocking at my heart too. My old folks were frail, and wanted to see the boy who had been so long away. At that moment I felt we had done our duty—done all we could for the prairie and the prairie folk. Surely we had earned a small reward? And so I said to my good old lady,

‘Lassie, we’ll go home.’ I sent a cable that afternoon.

Somehow that cable went round the prairie. News spreads like fire out West. The town had heard it. A teamster had said, ‘By Gee, he’s packing up; I saw him at his boxes as I passed the door.’ The ‘phone kept ringing; we did not deny the rumours. But the most awkward obstacle was my horse, my faithful Jimmy, now old and done. Looking through my study window, I saw him standing at the stable door, so old, forlorn, his head down, his eyes blinking, blinking. Had Jimmy sensed something in the hustle and bustle at our back door? Had he read the riddle when the hammer was going? I wondered. Horses are peculiar, much more sensitive and intelligent than many believe. I was compelled to go out to him, to pat him. Jimmy put his old head under my arm; he seemed so quiet, so strange that afternoon. Remorse touched me; we, of course, meant to leave him; but what base ingratitude! What treachery to an old friend of the manse! Jimmy had saved my life in many a blizzard. He had carried the doctor to the sick and dying. His good legs had borne my wife to a woman in agony with the pains of maternity. He was as great a gentleman, as great

a hero as Wolfe or Montcalm. And we were leaving him! . . . This was a horrible act, I thought, on returning to my study. However, the good Colin Cameron would keep him as a pensioner. Jimmy would be all right.

My resignation was now in ink and away through the post. The furniture we had sold to a new man, who was to get it on the day of our departure. The fares had been paid, date fixed, and train decided on. Our wardrobes had been added to for the journey. Excitement was high. Home was calling, calling; we were counting the days, and cables were raining in on us, offering us hospitality and a royal welcome. The children were talking about their grannies and uncles. My wife was buoyed up with the hope of looking from the shores of Ayrshire to the hills of Arran. O how happy we were! how great the future was going to be! The old wanderlust was loose once more.

Man proposes: God disposes; and on such occasions one finds unexpected friends. Late that night, when we were doing some packing, there was a knock at the door. On opening it I saw Jack Gruff. 'Say, Parson,

just a word with you,' he muttered, a trifle embarrassed, I thought.

'Sure ;' and I asked him in. He was given a seat and I offered him a cigar.

'Gordon,' he said to me, 'you know I ain't no holy roller, but this news has knocked me sick. I guess you and me ain't pulled well at times, but my bunch, bad as they are, are not as tight-fisted or as mean as folk say. I'm here not to give you a pipe, or a cheap box of cigars, like them lemonade conventions would do. You've been a good friend to Canada. You've fought me, you've beat me, so I respect you as a man. We had a meeting of the opposition to-day, and in ten minutes I got a thousand dollars. Here it is; we know you need it, and you've earned it. It's our back subscriptions. What's more,' he added, 'it may be true I've always tried to drive the parson out; but I tell you, Gordon, I've been pulling the wires to keep you right here. If you go, I'll eat my bloomin' hat. Good-night, Gordon; good-night,' and he went through the door.

I sat down astonished. Jack Gruff had been the most difficult man in town. I had opposed him, and, in many ways, used my own quiet methods to defeat his aims ;

but I had never hated him. Hate is a futile thing. Time . . . time . . . and the hand of the Lord were surer weapons. And that man had said those kind words; he had placed in my hands a thousand dollars. The seed of God had not fallen on stony ground.

‘Hello!’ said Paul on the telephone.

‘Yes, Paul?’

‘You’ve struck this town with a bomb. Mary has been crying all morning. Say, friend, it isn’t true?’

‘Yes, quite true, Paul,’ I replied with difficulty.

‘The managers of your church had a meeting last night. I hear they’ve refused your resignation and raised your salary another five hundred dollars.’

‘It’s not dollars, Paul, I’m after; just home, home.’

‘Guess I know the feeling. It’s a disease that hits me every Christmas, but you’ve got to get rid of it. You aren’t going home!’ and he laughed.

‘I am.’

‘I won’t believe it till I see the train go out. Bye-bye just now.’

‘See you later,’ I replied, hanging up the ‘phone.

A telegram.

Sorry to hear news of departure. My curate presses me to ask your reconsideration. He insists that your friendly and spiritual co-operation is absolutely necessary for the future of the town. We also have worked together so long. We have lived with the old-timers. My dear good friend, I hope you will not leave us now.—Sincerely,

BISHOP L—D.

Another telegram.

Cannot believe the news. Won't you stay ?

DENNIS.

Montreal.

That afternoon I had to ride over the prairie to arrange for a last home for Jimmy—a place where he would never work, but amble peacefully over the fields, waiting his call to the hunting-grounds, as the Indian would say. It was a pleasant August afternoon. A light breeze was waving the golden corn. This gentle movement rippled and rippled right over the plains. The sun was a blaze of gold. Birds were carolling with glee. The prairie chickens whirred and whirred across the fields. Men were busy in the fields. A good crop had come. Joyfully they were reaping the harvest. I was struck with the progress, impressed with the success of colonisation. The land that once was

so still, over which I had seen the Indians follow the buffalo, and the red-coats follow the warring half-breeds, was now a land of golden grain, happy men, and comfortable homes.

'Say, boss,' said a pug-nosed little boy, a perfect imp in jeans.

'Yes, Tommy?'

'Dad says you're beating back home.'

'That's true.'

'Gee! What about Santa Claus? Who's goin' to come down the chimney?'

'The other minister.'

'Don't know him. . . . Ain't any good to me. . . . And I guess you're a bit mean leaving me and dad all alone. But say! Dad said you could have this for the boys,' and he handed me a live gopher inside a little wooden box. A boy's gift, also a big gift, for Tommy meant it.

'Thanks, Tommy; I'll take that to my boys. Good-bye.'

'Good-bye, boss;' and he shook me awkwardly by the hand.

I rode on to the top of the trail, then I looked back. He was still leaning against the gate, looking confused and forlorn. Colin Cameron's farm was just a mile farther on: this was to be Jimmy's last

home. But that little boy, his words, his attitude, and the gopher rattling with indignation inside the box made such an impression on me that I simply could not go on to Colin Cameron's. I galloped back to Tommy.

'Ain't goin', then?' he said with amazing intuition.

'I don't know.'

'Bet you ain't.'

'Why?'

'That gopher won't let you;' and Tommy ran off home. Retracing my way, I arrived at the manse, stabled Jimmy as of old, gave the little gopher a feed, and went into the house. Mrs Jones and Mrs Winter were with my wife. Each young wife had now a baby in her arms. The scene before my entrance must have been somewhat distressing, for they brushed their eyes with handkerchiefs and tried to be brave. We had tea together; talk was difficult and much restrained. Somehow the joy of home was not so great; tender influences were pulling, pulling against our decision. Still, the fares had been paid, date fixed, furniture sold; the die seemed cast.

That evening a buggy stopped at the
P.P

manse door. One of Colin's sons helped his father out, for he was aging rapidly. He entered, a flush of excitement on his withered cheeks, a touch of moisture on his fine brow; his beautiful gray hair and beard, combined with the proud and magnificent poise of his head, made him a noble stalwart of the people. The trembling of his hands was new to me; Colin was surely near the allotted span. Tenderly I placed him in a chair, unwound the muffler from his neck, took off his cap, and laid them aside. My wife came in with just a glass of wine, for he was far too old to be out at nights. His boy sat in the sitting-room with my wife and family while we discussed affairs.

'It wass bad news . . . bad;' and he shook his head.

'I'm sorry you take it that way, Colin.'

'Yes; but I know the call too. . . . There wass a time when I wass chust mad to go. Like you, I sold my sticks; but the day of leaving was one of tears. My children knew nothing of home; they were Canadian-born. The glen was nothing . . . nothing at all to them. What did they know of Ben Nevis, Lochaber, Achnacarry, Ardgour, the ferry at Ballachulish, and the long dark road to Glencoe. . . . They had

never seen the deer; and never saw Lochiel, Glenfinnan was only a name. . . . The claymore and the targe that were carried at Culloden by my grandfather were only old iron to them. They were Canadian-born, just as yours are Canadian-born.'

'I never thought of that, Colin,' I said in a startled way.

'I tell you, sir, when I saw my children cry because they were leaving the prairie, the trail, the gopher, and their ponies, I knew it wass chust useless.

"Colin, we must just stay," said Flora.

"Yes, and forever, Flora."

"Yes, forever . . . forever," she said, and the tears came into her eyes. I wass a big strong man then, but I tell you, Mr Rollow, that I cried like a child. I wass chust mad for the glen, but I knew it wass not fair to the boys;' and he banged his fist on the table.

'I am afraid, Colin, it is too late, so far as we are concerned. Our passages are booked.'

'So wass mine!' he exclaimed.

'And my furniture sold!'

'Yes, and my land wass sold too.'

'But you have my resignation; a new man is coming; the die is cast. We must go home.'

‘Mr Rollow,’ he said with emotion, ‘I will not stop you. You haf earned the right to go home. You haf been good and kind to me and mine. But there is one thing I haf always dreamed; that wass when I wass gone that you would say the prayers over my grave. Mebbe I am a hard man, but this is a hard country. But for the church I haf done all I can. And when I go it would be chust grand that you would see my body to the grave, and speed my soul to God. . . . Oh, I am sad . . . sad;’ and he shook his head.

I was touched with the goodness, the faith of this dear old man. My children were also Canadian-born. And somehow the madness for home was vanishing; the need of staying loomed large and pressing. For twenty minutes we sat in absolute silence, the old man with his head bowed in sadness. He was the leader of the people, the patriarch.

At last my decision came.

‘Colin.’

‘Yes,’ he said quietly, raising his head, and I saw the tears.

‘I must call my wife, and abide by her decision. It is for her I have often wanted to go home.’

'That wass right; that wass just,' he muttered.

My wife came in, much excited. She gripped the situation in a flash.

'Margaret, Colin has given his message. You will understand. I am willing to stay, but you must be considered. I leave the matter in your hands.'

'Gordon, we must stay now. The children are so unhappy about leaving the prairie. Colin has been our friend. We cannot leave. He is old; he has been kind; it would not be fair; but oh! it is hard . . . yet . . . it is God's will, and God's will be done;' and she bravely stemmed her tears.

'Let us pray,' I said. With the old man we knelt on the floor and prayed for courage to face our disappointment, hope for the future, and joy in our task.

Since then we have often felt the call of home, but, somehow, it does not hit so hard. The day following our decision I received a letter from Colin saying that, my boy Ian being now ready for the land (he wanted to be a farmer), he would arrange to train him, and when he died Ian would have his farm, including house, stock, machinery, and the fourth part of his cash

account. Colin's sons had been told; they had agreed; Ian could come out as soon as he liked. Thus was Ian provided for.

With the thousand dollars from Jack Gruff I sent my other boy, Gordon, to the military college at Kingston, to be trained as an officer for the Canadian army. The increase in my salary also enabled me to send my two girls (Margaret and Grace) to the university at Saskatoon, where my good friends Deans Rutherford and Moxon would act as guardians.

God *does* provide.

CHAPTER XI.

A BUSY DAY.

THE longing for home having been overcome, and our minds being eased about the future careers of our children, my wife determined to take things more easily and get out more to the prairie, where the air is wonderful. It is the confinement of women in the houses of the West which makes them wan and weary. The men, who are always out of doors, are the picture of health. Colonel Walker of Calgary, a very old man, who has fought in a dozen wars and faced fearful hardships, is a splendid advertisement for the prairies.

One bright morning we harnessed Jimmy in the buggy and started on a round of visits. My wife had the holiday feeling; she was free of so many cares; the air was inspiring, and Jimmy spanked along the trail, quite delighted that the lady of the manse was once again on the road. We had many good friends to call on, but our first duty was to those who had little worries

and needed counsel and a smile. One can do a lot of good from the pulpit, but more good can be done by visiting; things can be tackled on the spot, and folks in trouble are glad to talk with the minister.

We stopped at the farm of Dick Gibbon, an American homesteader. It was plain that Dick was in a hole; he had had two bad harvests, and the present harvest was promising badly too, not so much on account of the crop, but owing to mechanical troubles. There was silence in the fields where there ought to have been plenty of action. I tied the horse to a ring at the door. My wife and I went in.

‘Glad to see you, Parson, and the missus too. Sit down, won’t you.’

‘Thanks,’ we replied.

‘Get you a cup of tea in a minute,’ was the cheerful salutation of the homesteader’s good wife. Bad luck never affects prairie hospitality.

‘What’s wrong, Dick?’ I said, looking out to the fields.

‘The binder’s gone crooked. Can’t do anything with it. I’ll have to wait till the other fellows cut their crop before I can get a machine.’

‘Try a new one, Dick.’

‘Gee! I haven’t a cent! Mortgaged up to the neck! The implement man won’t budge. Don’t blame him either. He might lose his money on me; times have been real bad.’

‘But that crop will see you through.’

‘Yep; but I guess they’re taking no risks nowadays.’

‘It’s risky waiting; you might get hail.’

‘Just what I’ve been thinking,’ he said, looking out of the window at the sky. ‘It’s too warm for my fancy.’

‘Colin Cameron has an old machine—it’s good enough—and I know he has a new one. He’s using the old one too; but he’s a good friend, and will help you through.’

‘Good scheme. But say! I don’t like to ask him. Everybody picks his pocket. I’m shy of touching a good fellow, though I like to do in a skunk.’

‘I’ll ’phone, Dick,’ I said, lifting the receiver. In a minute I was through to Colin. The difficulty was explained.

‘Send him with horses right now, Mr Rollow. We wass busy, but a man must have his harvest in.’

‘Thank you, Colin;’ and I put up the receiver.

‘He’s a good fellow. I won’t forget that.’

Excuse me, Parson. 'The missus will give you a cup of tea. I'm off for the binder.'

In a few minutes Dick was galloping a pair of horses down the road. He eventually got his wheat cut and threshed, but just in time; when the last bag was being filled the hail came down.

Colin's machine had saved the day.

The next visit was to the homestead of two young Scots from the Lowlands. The Morrisons were splendid young fellows. Luck had been with them from the start. Ten years' hard work had secured six hundred and forty acres free of mortgage, a good house, a splendid barn, and a fine herd of dairy cattle. It had been a Promised Land to them. They were temperate, God-fearing. John, the elder, was a bit of a wag; Duncan was a slow-thinking, serious lad. Both had been inseparable since boyhood. They had co-operated loyally; success was their reward. Alas! there was now a rift in the lute. A very handsome young woman had come to keep house for them. It was only human that she should stir their affections. She liked them both; both wanted her, and that was the cause of anger and the beginning of a vendetta. Having heard of the trouble, I

wanted to help the lads out, if that were possible. On our way to the farm my wife suggested she should get the girl aside and have a heart-to-heart talk. I was to see the lads.

‘Hello, John!’ I said, on meeting the elder on the trail.

‘A fine day, sir,’ he replied.

I jumped out. My wife drove on to the farm. John and I then talked about the crop, the horses, implements, prices, everything and anything rather than the topic of interest. Obviously John was uneasy; he wanted to unload his troubles; so I put my hand on his shoulder, and said, ‘John, I have heard of the bother. I’m from your own country. Let’s talk it out. We all like you boys. We want to see you happy.’

‘There’s no’ much to say—just this: I want tae marry Jean, so does Duncan. The poor lassie is just bamboozled, and doesnae ken what tae dae.’

‘But whom does she want, John?’

‘She likes us baith, but she would like tae marry me, and still have Duncan as our friend and partner in the farm. But Duncan wants her too, so what can a man do? I’m worried tae daith, Mr Rollow.’

‘Are you sure it’s you, John?’

‘I think so, but I can trust you. If you’ll see Duncan, and get him tae abide your decision, I’ll dae the same. That’s fair noo, is it no’?’

‘Yes, John, very fair. I’ll see Duncan;’ and off I went. Duncan was waiting for me at the door of the barn. We shook hands, but I thought him a little surly. Still, the lad was wounded to the heart, and one sympathised with his troubles.

‘Duncan, I have heard John’s story. Can you not agree as to who shall marry the lassie, and all settle down, and be friends?’

‘If she marries me, I’ll be friendly enough.’

‘Does she want you, Duncan?’

‘At times I think she does, but the noo it’s John. It might be me to-morrow,’ was his half-jesting, half-cynical reply.

‘It would be better to end the bother,’ I suggested.

‘Ay, sir, I would be glad o’ that,’ he said in a more serious tone. ‘I like John. We’ve been partners a long time noo. I hate rows.’

‘Duncan, if I see the lassie, get a definite decision as to whom she wants to marry, and arrange for the marriage next week, will you bury the hatchet?’

‘Yes . . . I think so. . . . But one o’ us must leave the hoose; that means splitting the farm, the cash, the cattle, and machinery.’

‘We could settle that after, Duncan. I think I’ll see the lassie now. After that I will see you.’

‘Very good, sir,’ was his respectful answer. By the way, I always noticed on the prairie that old countrymen invariably ‘sirred’ the minister; the Canadians or Americans usually said ‘Parson’ or ‘Boss.’

On entering the house I found a real bonnie lassie with tears in her eyes. Jean was just a grand girl, a good farmer’s daughter, one fit for the prairie, and a grand wife for the man who was to win. My wife had had a quiet chat with her. There was no need of further inquiry, for Mrs Rollow announced: ‘It’s John she wants; you had better settle the matter now, or Jean’s leaving here, and will no’ come back again.’

‘Then Duncan will have to find another house,’ I said.

‘Yes, Gordon. It will never do that the two brothers should live here now. The lad will get over it. I have a fine lass in my eye for Duncan. You talk to Jean. I’ll manage Duncan alright. I knew his father at home.’

What passed between her and Duncan I don't know. But she knew Duncan's ways, and Duncan knew the lass that Mrs Rollow had her eye on. He really expected Jean to marry John; it was just the surrender that seemed to tickle his Scots pride. However, Duncan surrendered with good grace after all. John was called in, and the two brothers shook hands. We all sat down to dinner. During the meal I acted as arbiter in the details of splitting the partnership; this was accomplished peacefully; and John, good fellow, gave more than he required to, as a compensation to the injured feelings of Duncan. The marriage was arranged not a week later as suggested, but a month later, when Duncan had a new house up, and also walked up the aisle of the kirk with the lass my wife had 'had her eye on.' So the double wedding saved a family feud, and brought more happiness to our land.

The scarcity of nice girls in these parts has often caused us bother, but Mrs Rollow always helped things out by securing the pick of the marriage market. Surely that was better than a dreich sermon in the kirk?

After dinner we bade good-bye to the lads,

and drove on to one of 'The Six Brides,' as the folks still called them. A few years had brought a handful of bonnie bairns. At the Mackays' farm there was a new baby giving trouble. This was Mrs Rollow's own department, so I hurried Jimmy on. We ultimately arrived at a fine prairie farm, good house, fine barn, a lovely garden, and in the garden a summer-house, where we found the young mother trying to croon a fractious baby to sleep.

'A fine laddie . . . a fine laddie, but he's tired, tired,' said Mrs Rollow, looking at the little fellow fidgeting and whimpering in his crib.

'It's the heat, I think,' said the handsome young mother.

'Not the heat, my dear,' my wife replied.

'And he cries so much, I don't know what to do with him. I'm just worried, and can't get any sleep.'

'I'm thinking, Agnes, you'll need the bottle for this little man. He's a trifle big for you to feed.'

'But I don't believe in bottle babies,' was the swift reply.

'Neither do I, Agnes; but it's not what we believe in, it's what we must do for the children. Come now, lassie, get me a bottle.'

‘I haven’t a feeding-bottle, Mrs Rollow,’ she replied, now resigned to the new order of things.

‘A lemonade bottle will do.’

‘But we have no rubber mouthpiece,’ was Agnes’s next discovery.

‘We’ll do as they did in Scotland long long ago. Just give me a nice bit o’ chamois leather. We’ll put that over the neck of the bottle, make a wee hole in it, and let the laddie have his fill.’

‘Just a minute, then,’ and Agnes went off. A bottle, a piece of chamois leather, and nice boiled milk were secured. Mrs Rollow put the improvised teat to the baby’s mouth. Lo, there was fury! Anger surged in his little breast, and his cries could be heard far down the trail.

‘What *shall* we do?’ exclaimed the distracted mother.

‘If you were not here, Agnes, I would just spank him. Temper! but we must keep at him.’ It was no use. This young Mackay was not going to be reared on chamois leather, not even by the minister’s wife.

‘Gordon, Gordon,’ she called.

I was sitting on the veranda with the husband. ‘Yes, dear?’

‘Give me that rubber valve of your fountain-pen filler.’

‘What a thing to use!’ I exclaimed.

‘If you were the mother of your own bairns, experience would have taught you a lot more, my man. . . . Thanks!’ and she smiled as I handed over the rubber valve. The valve was well washed. A test tube used for testing milk was next secured. On one end she stuck the rubber valve; the other end was dipped into the bottle of milk.

‘Try that, my little laddie,’ she said in her kind way to the baby boy.

Lo, it was magic! He took to the fountain-pen filler as other children take to candy. In twenty minutes he had devoured a good bottle of milk. After that he fell asleep. While he slept we had a cup of afternoon tea; the ladies talked shop about bottles, teething, rash, measles, nappies, and vaccination. This young mother was real glad to have a chat with an older woman. As we were leaving, my wife took down a note in her book to send out feeding-bottles, teats, and teething powders. Mrs Rollow was a grand visitor. Why shouldn’t I put that down in print?

On arriving at the Johnsons’ farm I found

the husband and the hired men breaking-in a young horse. The animal was spirited and powerful. It was harnessed in a prairie wagon well loaded with weights. Johnson was driving. A man on each side had a rope. The yelling and language were rather painful. Poor horse! it did not know what to do. Johnson was a good farmer, but a very poor horseman; he was not alone in that. Many a fine horse has been ruined by bad horse-breakers. The men were really afraid of the animal—a fatal attitude towards a young horse.

‘Say, Parson, can you give us a hand?’ said the perspiring farmer.

‘Yes, if you will cut out all that gear, send these noisy men to their shack, and give me a saddle. The horse is being made vicious; the poor animal is frightened to death.’

‘Gee! He’s a holy terror!’ replied Johnson.

‘Not a bit.—Are you, old fellow?’ I said, speaking quietly. He squirmed a bit at the strange voice, cocked his ears with alarm, and stabbed his feet into the ground.

‘No, lad! No, lad!’ I muttered kindly, patting him gently, ever so gently on the neck. Meantime Johnson and his men were

unharnessing the animal. Still speaking in a quiet voice, I managed to get a little pat on his head. He threw it up in anger. Again I tried, he threw it up again. They had almost spoiled his temper with their fooling. But I managed to tempt him with a biscuit, then another, and another, until he had eaten a pound. Next I gave just a little meal drink to *impress* upon him doubly that I was no enemy. All the time I was talking quietly and most intimately. Friend to friend. Believe me, a horse understands. My own Jimmy was standing in the yard looking on with amused contempt at the antics of the young horse. Eventually I brought Jimmy over. He rubbed noses; both developed a friendship; indeed, half-an-hour of kind manœuvring took away much of the terror of breaking-in.

‘Put the saddle on now, Johnson,’ I said.

This was difficult, for the animal was sensitive and the saddle tickled its back, a fact which ignorant horse-breakers forget. We undid the saddle again, and, taking some oil, I cooled the dry and sensitive hide.

‘Try it now,’ I said to Johnson.

He put the saddle on again; there was no resentment. But the real test was to come.

‘Shall we hold him, Parson?’ the farmer inquired, making to hold his head till I mounted.

‘No, thank you; we mustn’t alarm him again. He is a beauty; if we can only cure him by kindness he will be a wonderful horse.’

All was now ready. I was talking away to him in a quiet low voice about his friends on the ranges, and what great friends we were going to be, &c., &c. At last I got my opportunity. When his head was turned away from me, his mind concentrated for a moment on a white skirt flapping on the veranda, I leaped like a youngster into the saddle, and gripped his sides with my knees.

He bolted; my wife screamed, but there was no need of alarm. The road was clear. I let him go hammer and tongs, gently guiding him into a circle. The horse looked mad as he went round and round, but it was only nature resenting saddles and orders. At last his steps faltered; still he had a kick in him. He heaved fore and aft, then up like a broncho; but Jimmy used to do that. I crushed his sides with my powerful knees until he realised that a Scots Grey is not easily dislodged. He

cooled down, and was quiet and seemingly subdued. I dismounted.

‘Take off the saddle, Johnson,’ I suggested.

He did so. Then we gave him a rub down, a nice meal drink, another pound of biscuits, two or three bits of loaf-sugar. All the time I was talking, talking, talking. We had named him ‘Bobby’ now, and Bobby was being well impressed with the idea that we were his friends and would see that justice was always done. There was a slight cut on his nose from the branch of a tree that he had hit. We oiled this, and made such a fuss of it that Bobby was almost overwhelmed.

‘Put him in the buggy now.’

‘Is it safe?’ said Johnson.

‘I think so; we must take a chance with him.’

Very quietly he was harnessed. Johnson and I jumped up on the seat. Lifting the reins, I let him go down the trail. He was a little mad at first—afraid of the thing behind him, that was all. Soon he dropped into a sort of canter, then into a fair trot. We turned him round, and he came home like a good little boy.

‘Make a great fuss with him now,’ I said to Johnson. The farmer did so, cooling

him down with a nice cool sponge, drying him, throwing a light cover over his back to prevent a chill; then Bobby was led into the stable, where he found a few carrots, some bits of turnip, and here and there bits of lump-sugar.

‘What’s the bill, Parson?’

‘Just give me all your whips; I hate whips.’

‘Here you are, then.’

He passed me four whips; one was a brutal thing. I broke them up with a hatchet; then, turning to Johnson, I said, ‘Jim, that’s a good horse. A horse is just like you and me—hates torture, likes a square deal, and fond of sugar and biscuits for tea.’

‘Parson, I won’t forget that. I’m an ignorant man. I was afraid of that horse; but not now.’

Bobby was so kind that he became the hero of all the prairie children.

It was late when we turned Jimmy’s head homewards. The moon, however, was a good lamp, and the horse knew the road. The conveyance was weightier than when we started. There was a cheese, a good ham, a dozen jack-rabbits, half a sheep,

honey, butter, and a box of eggs. These gifts were unsought. Usually they were stuffed into the buggy when we were in the houses. And I mention that, not to enhance any popularity which we experienced, but to show the kindness of the prairie folks. In this most democratic country I ruled my people as the old-fashioned Scots ministers did, but they never saw the machinery of government. Believe me, they had to be ruled. There are problems out here too delicate for publicity. Each man for his own remedies.

When I came to these parts there was a tradition that a minister was a cross between a fanatic and an imbecile. Often the parson was openly scorned. One simply had to fight that down. A military life had given me certain physical qualities most useful for this work. Living a decent existence also gave one a strong body and a healthy soul. The power that comes from purity is the greatest thing in this world. But to that great ideal I never should have attained had it not been for a Higher Power and the influence of my good wife. Strange, even mad, as some of my performances may seem, remember all were done for good. When I was breaking that poor bewildered

animal in, there was a lesson being given to Johnson, who was brutal at times, cruel to horses, and, in drink, cruel to wife and children too. That man became so proud of driving Bobby without a whip that the value of kindness went home. Bobby returned him so much love that he developed in Johnson a latent vein of goodness and kindness. Bobby ultimately brought that family to church.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT WOMEN CAN DO.

‘**T**HE social bug’ (society craze) has often injured a new community. Comfort and wealth always create desires for companionship and amusement. In the West social affairs are absolutely necessary. Cut off as many communities are, the inhabitants are thrown on their own resources. It is only right that merriment should play its part, but there are degrees of merriment. Much depends on the women who lead. What happened in our town was the splitting up of the inhabitants into three groups known as: the Merry Guys, the Holy Bunch, the Ten-Cent Crush.

So far as social affairs were concerned, this was an unfortunate division, also unnecessary from the ministerial point of view. A town of a few thousand souls could well have dispensed with snobbish degrees, but human nature has always decided such affairs. The Merry Guys were the survivals of the One Hundred, who declined to follow the

leadership of Mrs Paul Dewy, Mrs Winter, and the mayor's wife. The standard of the manse was much too irksome for the Merry Guys. Led by Mrs Oscar Heishmer, an American, and wife of the soft goods man, they went their own sweet way as a protest against the 'Uplifters.' These Merry Guys consisted of both sexes, but the women ruled in a most effective manner. Bunkers Bluff was now witnessing within its own borders the repetition of the all-conquering part women have recently played in the middle west of the United States. Woman was surely boss in most things. As a matter of fact I am inclined to think that she would always have been boss, but the difference between the women of the past and the women of the Merry Guys was the day-by-day announcement that woman was almighty; also the sorry spectacle of husbands who before others, even their own children, resembled impressionable lumps of plasticine.

The Merry Guys were really amusing in many ways, but Paul, John, and my good friend Jack Moxon from Oxford were alarmed. The Merry Guys had rebelled against Church, State, and cultured Society. Religion was a game, politics was a game;

every man and woman had a price. Dollars was the standard; cynicism reigned; trust had vanished; faith, hope, and charity were no more. The props of life having been lost, all that was left was an incessant round of noise, meals, beer, and jazz. Children were a bore; free love was not so deadly in their eyes; and Bunkers Bluff was such a one-eyed town, according to their thinking, that there was created an excuse to have a mighty good time. When in doubt about their gospel all were fortified with the pronouncements of Isaak Heishmer, who often declared that 'religion was the morphia of statesmen.'

Such a revolt can be attributed to sudden prosperity, defective education, lack of home discipline, the advent of the motor-car and the modern drug store, as well as a reaction against that too stern puritanism which for two hundred years kept American women in subjection. A clever feminist had no difficulty in presenting a case for woman's freedom, but such an advocate has a difficult task to demolish the old-fashioned theory that without the Church, and the co-operation and guidance of man, woman, if not helpless, is so extreme in her pleasures that these become neurotic vices. Freedom

really had been turned into riotous abuse. Nevertheless, it would be unjust to blame the women entirely.

Commercialism has given amazing prosperity to the American continent. Commercialism has also dethroned woman. The old home life of America was once beautiful and inspiring; in many parts it is so to-day; but where factories gather, where industry is king and dollars supreme, and cosmopolitan emigrants the bosses and amusement kings, there will be found a loosening, a cheapening, and deadening of all that is pure and high. The cosmopolitans, unlike the northern host, are not seized with dreams of home, simple faith, and pure love. The café is the meeting-place; meals are taken in public; their woes and joys are on the table; their love-dreams are gathered in the six-shooting cinema; and their passions are whetted by the Yellow Press. Open diplomacy in domestic matters sounds well, but in practice it is often nauseating. Self-determination is the privilege of democracy, but at present it is not difficult to determine where self-determination of this kind is going to end. The whole scheme is an unconscious but gigantic assault on the charm and purity of women. Unable to control

this new-found freedom, woman—this type of woman—is cantering to the brink of Hell. The cosmopolitan menace is an awful thing; it is lustful, ruthless, ghastly, and at present overpowering, *but we can defeat it.*

The Merry Guys were not omnipotent; they were in the minority; all their escapades had the sanction of the cosmopolitan nobs, whose wealth is secured by parasitic trades and callings. But the majority in this town belonged to what the Merry Guys called 'The Holy Bunch'—a sarcastic term for that decent section of society which believed that home was home, children were jewels, culture important, and that merriment should be purged of dope, piffle, and racket. Paul was a great and good American; he represented the New England tradition; he knew its defects, but was proud of its virtues. He and his good wife, therefore, took their stand against the froth of society. John, the curate, was their ally. Experience had trimmed away the superior air of Oxford; he was now a lover of all that was good in American and Canadian democracy. He saw its tremendous advantages over Old World oppression and poverty; but, like Paul, he wanted to guide this riot of pros-

perity and freedom into the channels of lofty idealism. His wife was his partner in the fight. The mayor's wife was also a confidante. These women seized the reins of power, not for the glory, but the general good. And so we had a war, a kind of holy war, but a war that was essential.

'The Holy Bunch' did not preach, avoided malignity, and stilled the wicked form of gossip which we find in all the parishes of the world. It was really a war of babies, prams, cots, firesides, and cosy living-rooms. Who would have the most comfortable home, the healthiest children, and the happiest husband was the cry. There was no dour solemnity, no sullen form of pleasure; no bowing to that bugbear of puritanism—hypocrisy. It would be stupid to say that in this group lay all the charm, the kindness of Bunkers Bluff. Not at all. Their opponents were not without their virtues. But in a quiet, sweet way the advocates of home sweet home idealised the true charms of rusticity, the abiding power of love, and the glory of maternity. Those who believed in no children and a good time found it hard to 'put it over' a sweet woman with lovely kiddies round her knees. Canada hungered for its own

little children. The prairie called for men and women to fill the land; public opinion ultimately glorified a sweet woman who walked down Main Street with a bonnie baby in a pram.

To me, growing old in the service of the Master, there was much to be thankful for, much to be proud of. Bit by bit the rudeness of pioneering fell away. Slowly but surely the homes were enlarged, brightened, made sanitary, stocked with books, filled with love, and surrounded with pretty gardens, which created rest, the sense of permanence, and the joy of peace. Under the banners of Paul, John, and their willing wives and helpers marched the defenders of faith, the champions of children. In time we built a great big school, and this, with the help of the willing teachers, was made a fairyland for babes, a university for youth.

On our flanks the enemy hung; the darts were often thrown; we felt the sting, and often heard the laugh of cynics and fools; but good cannot be throttled. All through the ages the wicked have ultimately been vanquished. The 'Big Noise' of a prairie town is a spectacle for humorists. Cosmopolitan dope and sugar-coated atheism never has stood the test of time. There is no peace

where passion reigns; no love where children are banned; no happiness where God is slandered and religion fooled. The Merry Guys must always have our pity. Our quiet war ultimately proved to several that the Holy Bunch worked not for self-glory or reward, but for that goal which doth ensure a holy calm, the quiet noon, and the happy even-song.

The difficult portion of our community was the 'Ten-Cent Crush,' that unfortunate group of outcasts, mainly aliens, who creep around the fringe of a western civilisation—Chinamen, Dagoes, Poles, Russians, and other helpless ones from the slums of a European system. They were not many, but they represented a great peril to this young democracy. Incapable of endurance, unwilling to try, skilled only in the trade of serfs and the wiles of courtesans, steeped in strange fanaticisms, suspicious of other tribes and seeking only wealth, they formed a menace to progress and idealism. All over this West it is the same. Canada and America must bar the gates against those decadents who will not honour the nobility of labour or salute that fervent idealism which, despite its blunders, has made the West worth while.

But the Church knows no caste, no pride, no racial feuds. Even the outcast must be sheltered and warmed. Paul Dewy had a passion for a clean good town; he was so successful that foreigners could not run a 'Red Light' area. All that was obnoxious in the cosmopolitan code he thundered at and ruthlessly destroyed. Around that brave good man often surged angry and bitter storms, but his idealism was a powerful, at times, a crushing force. The short-cut he would have; by the short-cut he won. When the fight was over he would gather the poor tools and serfs of the cosmopolitan creed and feed them as if they were his own. This brave American proved to me that within America there lie tremendous powers for good. Paul was a giant for God.

The measure of success is the measure of our faith; we get what we deserve. Defects in our work are usually defects of our own. Men take us at our own value. It is well to be strong, be watchful and jealous of our good name. Our curate surely proved all that. The High Church ritual became Low Church through experience. At times the Low Church became No Church. John saw the

old error of worshipping form and not the spirit. Unlike certain dons of Oxford, he did not waste his hours in a fight for mitre, cassock, surplice, incense, and candles. This rather rude democracy was impatient of the stagecraft of religion: the cry for results penetrated even the walls of the Church. Not a bad cry at times. John took up the challenge. Without fuss, without noise, he displayed that in good manners lay power: in culture, security; and in faith, the peace that passeth all understanding. He was the friend of the Jew, the publican, and sinner. The Cross went with him into the bedroom of the tippler and the wanton. When times were bad, or the prairie fire surged like red-tongued furies around a farm, this brave gentleman of England always commanded 'women and children first,' and after them the horses, dogs, and cattle in the barns. All this bears out what I have said before, that we are blind to the heroism around us. We simply do not know the good before our eyes. The world rushes to honour the latest prophet of a tin-pot religion, and forgets that day by day, year by year, men like John go on, hold on, and often die unhonoured and unsung.

But in this great war for good it was the women who were the advance-guard. Women always have been better than men. Idealism is their portion. Emotion is ever knocking at their hearts. Love means so much to them. They hunger for the joys of maternity, the bliss of domesticity, the charms of closed doors and a group of bonnie bairns catching the sunbeams through the window-panes. In the great story of colonisation the men have played a noble part, but these good men will tell you that with the women came purity, comfort, and affection. Of course it is easy to point to the fallen, to embellish the sordid, and rave round the wanton. One, however, must take wide views, measure the good with the bad, when the good will be found overwhelming. I have found in the blackest of hearts a ray of truth. In the soul of a foolish woman one can find a little gleam of Christ, which may be widened, and so blind the follies of passion. The unfortunate always have been with us. That must not warp our judgment or chill our admiration.

Looking back, I marvel at the heroism of the women who pioneered. From Nova Scotia to Victoria, from New York to Los Angeles one can pick up the threads of a

mighty story. Without wealth, destitute of defence, exposed to the scorching sun, then the awful blizzard; often surrounded with bloodthirsty Indians, who butchered and scalped them. Yet they went on. With their hands they tore the branches for a bivouac; leaves and mud often made a roof. In an open patch they helped to dibble the corn. Wild fruit was gathered from the woods. Prairie chickens were lured with their wiles. They often helped the men to clear the forest and tame the prairie. Day by day they repelled the savage by devotion to the humble tasks. In the lonely forest or out in the lone bald prairie their sweet voices sang the hymns and psalms of the fatherland. Often deceived, sometimes assaulted, the great amongst them still pressed forward, knowing that in time the faith of their fathers would triumph over the terrors that surrounded.

From scenes like these, from women so brave, one coined a moral. In humble hearts was found the stuff of heroes. Humble homes often gave the key to power and immortality. A sweet smile, a kindly nod, humour from good clean eyes, and a plain cup of tea from the worn hands of an old woman farmer were links in a

marvellous story. And yet we search for romance without our borders. We often scream for the tale of a much-photographed fairy of the films. To the uttermost end of the earth men are sent to dig up the tales of cannibals and Bluebeards. A subtle system compels the deification of the 'Big Noise,' a veneration of a philosophy more fit for the refuse dump. Ever away we run, ever afar we seek, yet all the time in Main Street—yes, Main Street—on the prairie trails, in the prairie homes there can be found men like Lincoln, and women like Mary too.

I marvel at our blindness; but time may open our eyes.

CHAPTER XIII.

SIMPLE PLEASURES.

IN winter time we had a lot of simple fun in the homes of the prairie folk. There were no gilded halls in which to chant our songs or do the light fantastic on the toes. No warm broughams to call at the manse and whirl the minister through well-lighted streets to a house with all the comforts of the Sautmarket. For a convivial gathering we had to go miles and miles. The minister and his lady had just to travel like other folk, in a big corn wagon with plenty of straw in the bottom. Into the straw we stuck our limbs to keep them warm. A dozen people would be jammed tight together to conserve the warmth. Over our bodies we spread good fur or woollen rugs. Our heads, especially our ears, were well protected. Two or four good strong Clydesdale horses did the pulling. *En route* we sang the songs of Scotland or the ditties of the old Canadian voyageurs. Now and again a man would

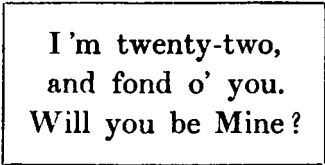
strike a match to light his pipe—also to see if his neighbour's nose was not frost-bitten. Should frost have affected the nasal organ, a handful of snow was picked off the wheel and a good friend would *rub, rub, rub* the nose and so restore the circulation. When our limbs grew stiff we just jumped out and ran behind the wagon till warmth came back, then into the wagon again, and so on till we reached our destination. How different from the days when we sat on the silk-corded cushions of an Edinburgh landau or snuggled into the cosy brougham of an Ayrshire parish.

Of course there was no orchestra. For many a year there was not a piano for miles around. But young Colin Cameron had been taught the bagpipes. John Mackay was grand at the fiddle. Wattie Walker had a good-going melodeon. The Macgregor trio had organised a mouth-organ band. Dan Brown was just a marvel with a penny whistle. In the houses of the Old Covenanters and Methodists were portable church organs. These organs were sacred for a long long time. But the artful Hetty Johnson became so expert at playing 'The Flooers o' Edinburgh' and 'The Grand Old Duke of York' that the old folks in time

relented: the ban was lifted off the kist o' whistles, and to the organ the lads and lassies walloped their heavy-shod feet on the barn floor. Out on the lone prairie, at forty below, with only the moon for a press reporter and a wolf in the outside gallery, the prairie folk hooched and hooched like the Hielanmen at Jamaica Brig or in St Andrew's Halls. There was a shaking of old heads for many a day; many a Calvinistic prayer against the 'gaun ons'; much talk about fire, brimstone, and the end o' the world from all those stern wards of the old order. But as the days rolled on, even the gray-beards banished the terrors of damnation and travelled twenty and thirty miles to shoogie the legs at a polka or stumble over a table in the waltz. We had to make fun for the young folks: many a happy night we had.


When our legs were tired the hostess would cram the guests into a little kitchen, many perforce being jammed tight on their hunkers against the wall. Hot coffee was given in delf or enamel mugs; apple-pie was served in good big chunks; fruit we had all the way from California; and 'conversation lozenges' too! From lad to lass would pass the old-fashioned symbols of Cupid.

A smile was often raised as a bonnie girl looked at



I'm twenty-two,
and fond o' you.
Will you be Mine?

A 'boy' would grin when he got this:



Whistle,
and I'll come
to you, my
Lad.

Dugal, aged fifty, a confirmed bachelor, would reply:



I'm Ower
Young
to Marry
Yet.

After refreshments the older folks would retire for a smoke and chat about home, church, state, and farm. Meanwhile the young ones enjoyed themselves with parlour

games, such as Spinning the Plate, Washington Post, Blind Man's Buff, &c. The fun was hearty, the fellowship fine; friendships were formed, and such friendships are enduring. Paul and John were the leaders in these simple merry plays. There is no ceremony out West. Remittance men plumped down in our midst scorned such affairs for a time, but experience worked a change; these visitors had to forego the standards of May-fair. A blasé man gets little pity in our land. To me, after a few years in an officers' mess, it was not so childish as it looked. One had to march with the slowest intellect, to keep in tune with simple minds, to remember always that the world is not made up of dons, publicists, and courtiers, and the task of a minister is to quietly mould the pleasures as well as the morals of the race. These happy nights were better than sucking grog in a low saloon. The 'Floors o' Edinburgh' healthier by far than retailing sensual anecdotes; a good mouth-organ superior to the amorous guitars of cosmopolitans who peddle their lures in 'Red Light' quarters. The simple joys of the prairie folk repel the sordid and the vain.

My word, and the curling was grand! Canadians can curl. There was no need

to pray for Jack Frost; he was sure for a good many moons. Curling on the ice with a bright winter's sun was exhilarating. I would not change the prairie curling for all the winter sports in Switzerland. We had little to do in the winter. The old ladies were gathered in one house for a good crack about the fashions or the bairns; the younger ones slung their skates on their shoulders, and the men carried their curling-stones. Off we would tramp through the light powdery snow to the slough. A fire was lit near at hand to keep the coffee hot and warm a good Irish-stew. The lassies on with their skates and whirled away singly or in pairs, making the most beautiful evolutions. Talk about dancing for a graceful deportment—why, it does not have a look in with skating! Watching these bonnie girls, all wrapped in pretty furs, circling and zigzagging across the ice was an inspiration to a novelist or an artist. But we had not much time to watch the ladies. We out with our brooms and sooped, sooped, sooped awa', as they do in Perthshire and Galloway. The roar of the curling-stones travelled far over the prairie, while the hearty laughter was a tonic to those who had been feeling glum about prices at the elevator. Many a quiet bet

we had : often I lost a hat or a box of cigars against Paul, John, and the farmers ; but as a rule I skipped a good Scots crew, who became terrors to the men of Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, and Edmonton. What should I do without the curling !

In summer we had our annual show, which we called our Exhibition. This is the great feature of farming life in the West. Like the Highland Show and the Chicago Exhibition, it was a place to strive for honours for one's horses, cows, bulls, calves, pigs, dogs, and hens. We started from a humble show of about twenty men, five cows, two bulls, four dogs, and three wyandottes, and grew and grew until we attracted all our rivals for miles around. Farmers followed the tips of the great Archie Macneilage in the *Scottish Farmer*. When times were good Archie would get cables for Clydesdales, Ayrshires, shorthorns, collie dogs, leghorns, wyandottes, and bantams. The government was good too. We had good experts—Jack Auld always travelling round. The herds when we started were poor scraggy ones, more like the lost cows of the Hebrides than the fat stock of the plains. But the farmers persevered ; bit by bit herds were built up. Men began to

dream of blue ribbons, gold medals, and silver cups. All the harmless tricks of Border shepherds and Galloway drovers were whispered around. An Angus would have his hair curled like a negro's from Mombasa; an Ayrshire cow would appear smoothly sleek and silky as an Angora goat; a great Clydesdale from Archie Macneilage would come stamping and tramping down the trail, with a glossy coat that made men shout, 'Gee, boss! You've got the treacle inside and the brilliantine outside his carcass.' Wyandottes and leghorns, groomed to perfection, would cock-a-doodle-doo all the way to the exhibition. On exhibition days we were as proud of our own town as a Hiellanman is of his snuff, his kilt, and his hose.

This annual exhibition was also a general fair. Six shooting 'sheriffs' from Montana would ride into the town like Buffalo Bill going out to the Indian wars. Behind them came the wagons, with 'Jack, the man-eating lion from Mombasa,' advertised as 'the only animal who had eaten a nigger king, ten piccaninnies, and three British generals.' The tiger was guaranteed 'Prime stuff from Bengal, with claws that would tear concrete out of the Statue of Liberty, and teeth

known to have chewed through a ten-foot wall to get a tasty chunk off an Indian rajah's leg.' A wild-cat from British Columbia was said to have dropped from a tree on to the head of a C.P.R. engine-driver and chewed up his scalp and nose. A half-starved Polar bear, looking 'a wee bit scabby,' as they say at home, had a ticket stating it was 'the goods from Greenland, ate dogs for dinner, cats for tea, and little boys instead of apple-pie.' Then followed the usual circus, with piebald horses that bowed to the ladies, picked up handkerchiefs, and saved Dusty Bill the cowpuncher in an imitation forest fire. A broncho-busting outfit was included, led by Sam Bustem, the man who could ride anything on four legs between Fort Garry and the place we are not allowed to write about. Waboomba was a nigger with no legs, who for ten cents told the fortunes of the prairie girls, vowing by all the powers of earth and heaven that they would marry he-men, with gold teeth, big farms, and Ford cars with musical horns that sing 'Way down in Dixie' through the week and 'Two little blue eyes' on Sunday mornings. Wrestlers, acrobats, giants on stilts, lemonade, ice-cream, and hot-dog stalls completed an invasion

that filled the minds of the children for months.

This was the great time for the prairie folk. Preparations went on for months. Timothy Eaton's and Simpson's voluminous catalogues were scanned and scanned for new skirts, new blouses, shoes, harness, polishing paste, hoof-oil, hair-oil, and all the paraphernalia for men, women, children, and beasts. Down the trails the 'phones were ringing with gossip. 'Sadie Tomson has a new white silk blouse, mauve cuffs, mauve collar, and diamond-shape buttons. Just swell she is.' . . . 'Clara Gordon is rigging herself out in tartan skirt, heliotrope jumper, suède shoes, and velvet tammy. Looks prime.' . . . 'Elsie Cochrane has bought a white pleated skirt with blue bobs down the sides. Sweet, eh?' . . . 'Sam Brown has bought a new shirt. Just fancy!' . . . 'Bill Drummond has a blue suit, yellow socks, and Boston boots. Dandy kid, he is!' . . . 'The parson's wife's got new elastic-side boots.' . . . 'And the parson's had new black trousers from town: Jim Coppem saw the parcel at the station and *looked* at the invoice.' . . . 'Guess it's going to be some exhibition, Jim. Saw Jack Brown doing his cows' backs with curling

tongs, and I hear Bill Cameron has been puttin' curlin'-pins in the mane of his Clydesdale.' . . . 'Say, Jim, seen Dad Green's goat? Why, he's been washin' its beard as if it was his very own!'

To the children the exhibition was the marvellous event of the year. The little ones did not get much fun, after all is said and done. No wonder they dreamed of lions, tigers, wolves, bronchos, shooting-alleys, lemonade, ice-cream cones, and brass bands. They groomed and groomed their ponies for the races; their rabbits were brushed a hundred times. 'Touser' and 'Bob,' the long-suffering collie dogs, had to be combed and combed. Long and lovingly they looked at a pile of five-cent pieces with which they would see the side-shows. And when the great day came they were up with the sun and off on their ponies, landing in town when all were asleep and the exhibition men only yawning in their tents.

By 10 A.M. things began to move. Train after train came in with farmers, their wives, children, animals, and produce. The Bow Creek Brass Band in Salvation Army trousers, Scots Guards tunics, and old shakos from the Hussars were now marching down Main Street playing 'Who's your Lady

Friend?' and 'Last night I saw you . . . I saw you . . . I saw you.' Behind marched all the societies of Bunkers Bluff: 'The Ancient Order of Coyotes,' 'The Society of Blue Noses,' 'The Rowcheerusons,' 'The Grand Lodge of Muskoka Wallaboos,' 'Cincinnati Queer Blokes,' 'The Secret Order of Old Chimers,' and so on. Following in the van were all the prairie folk, the youngsters in comic paper hats blowing whistles and mouth-organs. Round the exhibition grounds went the procession. All halted in front of a raised platform, where a big chief from Ottawa informed them *once again* that they were the salt of the earth, the good-goods of the West, the one hundred per cent. Canadians, true blue patriots, mighty fine fellows, and lovely women of the plains. Yes, sir! they had cut ice, put it over the lone prairie, good and well; why, they had knocked the grain market of America dead stiff, and made the West the talk of the whole darned world. After this annual spoonful of flattery, the gathering dispersed to collar gold medals, blue ribbons, silver cups, 'hot dogs,' lemonade, and ice-cream cones.

Oh my! we did enjoy ourselves.

CHAPTER XIV.

STANDARDISATION.

UNLESS the intellectuals and artists on the American continent give tone and variety to the standardisation of mind, body, and environment, the inhabitants will soon resemble War Office furniture, and be ticketed by cartoonists as:

AMERICANS AND CANADIANS STANDARDISED

GENERAL SERVICE PATTERN.—MARK IV.

The passion for standardisation has its origin in sound business principles: it is distinctly American. But there can be too much standardisation, too much organisation. On the other hand, there can be too much individuality. The genius of the world early flocked to these shores. Genius gave the impetus to the political and commercial schemes which have so much wealth and power. To exploit this to the full Big Business decreed standardisation. In a way

this was necessary. A vast continent, a great population, long and expensive haulage charges necessitated the maximum of efficiency at the minimum cost. No matter what Syndicalists and Fabians declare, standardisation has given to Americans and Canadians the cheapest and most efficient farm machinery in the world. For the masses and general purposes there is no car like the Ford. Mail-order systems have made it possible for the loneliest settler to buy what he wants, in the style he wants, and delivered cheaply and promptly at his door. Good business! A magnificent organisation—the best in the world!

Competition, however, has affected the commercial world in such a manner as to cause a dull dead uniformity in the making of goods. To cut prices, repetition work is essential; to sell, men must advertise. Unfortunately the good-goods—and these are good-goods—have not kept pace with the daring, the originality, the genius employed in *advertising* the goods. Where in all the world can you see such brilliant advertising? The weekly and monthly magazines are so magnetic that even a poor parson is lured on to buy. One of my recreations is the reading of American and Canadian advertisements.

The goods are all right, but the passion for things one hundred per cent. American or Canadian is also evidence of parochial thinking. Emerson and Henry James saw this long ago, and nobly led the war for wider views, a broader landscape, and more varied tones. Emerson, towards the end, relented and came back to things American. He did to this encourage youth—a splendid thing, but loose thinkers have misinterpreted his call. One hundred per cent. American is now the cry. To secure this standardisation has been hauled in as the sergeant-major of nationalism. Up to a point one must have sympathy. Thinking Americans fear the awful and discordant host which has poured through Ellis Island in recent years. Foreigners, who have asked for American (or Canadian) citizenship, often start an offensive campaign against the country of adoption. The grievances which they have had against czars, byzantine emperors, or sultans they now hurl at Ottawa or Washington. Hence the determination to crush the individualism of the crowd by the boosting of the flag, standardisation of thought, and, indirectly, standardisation of goods. The scheme is good enough, but there is not enough colour, not enough variety in the plan or the goods.

And so we find at all points a tremendous waving of flags. A daily excuse is found for wagging the Stars and Stripes or the Canadian flag. Every town, every house, every outside lavatory has a flag. One meets motorists humming along with the name of their home town painted on a pennant, the pennant being stuck in the back of the car. As car after car goes by we see:

WISCONSIN.

CINCINNATI.

MEDICINE HAT.

MOOSE JAW.

BUNKERS BLUFF.

In the long ago the cavaliers carried pennants on their lances; the motorists' pennant is the modern way of announcing that a *he-man of our town* is on the open road. Woe unto the man who would dispute the virtues of Wisconsin, Medicine Hat, or Bunkers Bluff! Out of gold-filled mouths will surely come the wrath of men who honestly believe that heaven and earth and all that therein is are concentrated within their own little town. 'Yes, sir! Take it from me! . . . Yep!'

Undoubtedly this has helped to sell the corner lots of Canada and U.S.A. It has even lured Kipling from his arm-chair across the plains and into the environs of Medicine Hat. 'Kipling was right here! . . . Some guy! . . . Boosted us all right! . . . Guess he knew we had the goods. . . . Sure! . . . There ain't no flies on Medicine Hat. . . . No, *sir!*'

Harvard, Yale, and McGill have striven manfully to stem the riot, but standardisation has won and may hold the trick. One has no difficulty in picking up the nationality of emigrants on arrival, but in a year seventy-five per cent. are lost in a sea of blocked suits, leather waist-belts, bulb-toed boots, chewing-gum, town flags, and Ford cars. Between New York and 'Frisco, Montreal and Vancouver, one meets

AMERICANS AND CANADIANS STANDARDISED.

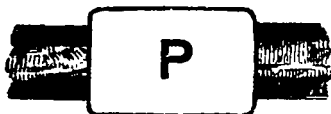
This is a tremendous compliment to the shrewd men of New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, who, by a brain-wave and syndicated advertisements, can compel almost every son-of-a-gun to 'walk around in Maconochie's blocked suits, Mulligatawny's

two-dollar pants, and Isaako's bulb-toed boots, all guaranteed prime, fit for Roosevelt, and fit for you, the good-goods. . . .

◆ Yes, sir.'

But a war has now set in; this war is led by university dons and educated citizens. With the goods there is no quarrel; to be perfectly frank, I believe that the goods, with the exceptions of leather and woollens, are the best in the world. It is the protest against dull dead uniformity that has arrived. Men are anxious to preserve that individuality which made Canada and U.S.A. worth while. In Bunkers Bluff Paul and John headed the van. Paul was a proud and great American. In most things he was an artist. He had rooted out the bastard architecture of Main Street; killed the standardised design of houses; believed that Dana Gibson ought to be let loose in the designing-rooms where men's and women's suits were designed; and, on the subject of fashions, the ladies had told him that they did want to be different from the ladies of Chicago, New York, Moose Jaw, and Medicine Hat. Paul also objected to wearing the same waist-belt that was worn from New York to Los Angeles. On this belt all Americans have a nickel buckle with the

letter signifying the Christian name. Paul was standardised—



Sitting in a parlour car or a street trolley, the whole world could see *that* P., and, by deduction (while looking round the side of their newspapers), could 'figure it out that that guy sitting right there had been christened Peter, Paddy, or Paul.' Very useful in the early stages of romance; often fatal after an offence against the law; also objectionable that the central point of man's abdomen should be the name-plate, the visiting-card, and letter of introduction to the whole wide world.

Travel from east to west and you also find that eighty per cent. of the citizens carry three or four metal badges pinned on their lapels. The drummers who came to Bunkers Bluff made a point of emphasising that they were members of the Loyal and Ancient Order of Galloping Buffaloes, Associates of the Secret Society of Jumping Elks, Members of the Cincinnati Oldfellows, and so on. Another drummer would introduce a new arrival thus: 'Say, meet Jack

Hubbub, President of the Salt Lake Convention of Galloping Gondoliers.' Jack Hubbub got right in with both feet, snapping up orders for pop-corn, beans, ice-cream cones, and tinned tomatoes from Ohio. Public opinion is on the side of societies, conventions, and badges. Not a bad thing at all. But oh! save our minds, our souls, our bodies from dull dead uniformity. I don't want to be labelled like pop-corn or tomatoes. One must protest against being ticketed metaphorically, as:

A PRAIRIE PARSON.

WESTERN TYPE.

DENOMINATION—PRESBYTERIAN.

HABITS—STANDARDISED.

INTELLECT—MARK IV.

The first note in this war was really struck by the curate, who walked down our Main Street one morning in plus-fours, a Donegal hat, and a walking-stick. A walking-stick! Only a fool Englishman carries a walking-stick out west, as the saying goes. A stick is the badge of the effeminate, while plus-fours and a Donegal hat were the evidence of sartorial bolshevism. Every

storekeeper, every woman in Main Street, came out to see him. 'By Gee! And this town is looking up. If the coyotes smell that guy on the trail I bet they'll chew that rig off his carcass. Beats me to know why them ginks from the Old Country can't wear our clothes. I've figured it out that that parson's clean gone!' Thus spoke Bud Dawson, a soft-goods man. Bud, however, got another shock when Paul sallied forth for the newly created tennis-club in white flannels and a Yale blazer. And when the same Paul began to take his morning exercise in short pants, bare knees, and a white sweater, Mush Bonner, the Antinomian, owner of two wives and two families, declared that 'a guy who showed his knees to women was not fit to be a parson in this town.' For sheer devilment I then took a walk in a kilt. Down Main Street the tartan fluttered in the western breeze. Bud's eyes almost jumped out of the sockets, and all the ladies took post behind the blinds. 'Say, fellows, if that ain't the rig of mad medicine men and chewers of men and babes, I'll eat my hat! Why, every woman in the town now knows that the Scots parson has hair on his calves!' was Bud's judgment on the Highland garb.

From Galashiels the home girls received good Border tweed. A Highland girl also secured some tartan and Harris tweed from Chalmers, Oban. Forthwith began the war of skirts and costumes. Tartan-made skirts were made by an Old Country tailor now in the town. Brown brogue shoes were imported. Shepherd tartan and other stockings came too. When our ladies walked abroad the prevailing tradition of standardisation was injured. Badges somehow began to disappear off the men's jackets. Rather than wear a 'visiting-card' on his belt, Paul took to a cummerbund in summer. But it was difficult to kill the standardised habit of carrying four fountain-pens, three pencils, and a steel holder for refills, all marshalled in line in the outside pocket of the jacket; a habit which gave tourists the impression that all Americans and Canadians were newspaper reporters. Nor could the rebels shatter the scheme of a mouth of gold. Seventy-five per cent. believed this to be the hallmark of the big guys. Democracy, after the War of Independence, issued decrees against titles, rank, and gold-braid which the citizens now find awkward. Deep in our hearts we are all snobs. Thackeray has told that well. We are barbarians

too. Like the savage we really want colour and ornaments. A Highlander is a peacock in a kilt; an Englishman is a bravado in Windsor uniform; the Irishman feels he *is* an Irishman when he has knee-breeches, green stockings, a tail coat, pot hat, and a shillalah in his hand. For long the Americans and Canadians could wear the sombrero, Texas shirt, riding-breeches and spurs, and wave a nickel-plated six-shooter. But colonisation has swept all colour and romance aside. Washington and Ottawa forbid the airs of Castilian dons, the breast-plate of the Life Guards, and the titles of the nobs. Standardisation has strangled the inherent love for plus-fours, Bond Street suits, and every man his own designer and architect. And so poor mortals are thrown back on little flags, metal badges, toothpicks, and the mouth of gold. The most successful, the hardest-working people in the whole world are being gruelled into sombre automatons who travel dolefully in elevators and parlour cars.

No wonder Paul led the riot. The school-masters and schoolmaams backed him up. Together they started a scheme to take off the faces of children the solemnity of standardisation. Montessori was hauled into

the piece; even Coué was given a show. One could almost hear 'Day by day and in every way we are growing more individual and individual.' Auto-suggestion conveyed to the children that they were to be good citizens of this new and wonderful country, but on no account were they to surrender will-power to mob-rule and conventions, or believe that a *he-man* was one who glories in a block suit, bulb-toed boots, and a chewed cigar in a mouth of gold. The school became a gallery of colour and romance. Cheap philosophy and parish-pump nationalism got the boot. The big boost never did and never will make cultured citizens. Boston may be a washout in the view of ten-cent thinkers, but Boston, when it comes to speaking, can still chill the ardours of the carpet-bag man who peddles in oratorical piffle and gramophone rule.

Every man for his own town. It was Paul, the American, who really ruled this Canadian town. Unlike some vendors of ploughs and binders, he was not there as the advance guard of reciprocity and ultimate absorption. He was there for a far higher purpose, the propagating of the Gospel of God. Nationalism was not his line of business. Internationalism maybe—

not the internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky, but the internationalism of Longfellow, Emerson, and Henry James. Too long has the world been angered by the parish pump. There is more in heaven and earth than flag-wagging or jingo clap-trap. On both sides of the line there are things and deeds that annoy. Canada has its parochial side; America has features which repel and rouse censure. But surely it was a happy sign that America could send Paul Dewy to work for Canada, to make good Canadian citizens, and keep Canada, *as we intend to keep it*, to the Brotherhood of God, and under the flag of the Motherland.

CHAPTER XV.

LOCHABER NO MORE!

BUNKERS BLUFF was still moving forward. The C.P.R. headed the list of pioneers. Henry Ford began to send in motor-cars by the dozen. The Ford car has brought comfort, convenience, and wealth. Men and women need not be marooned nowadays. The poorest farmer has a Ford; our washerwoman has a Ford; even Wong Soo, who irons my collars, has a Ford. This motor-car has worked wonders. At first I thought it would solve much of the trouble about getting people from the back end of the prairie to church. It did for a time. Alas! it has also sent some of the young folks far afield on Sundays. The Ford car may yet destroy religious life in the West; thus a splendid invention is misused. But don't blame the Ford; we must look within for the trouble. Sweeping across the continent is a wave of cynicism and unhealthy discontent. We who have worked for the New Jerusalem are disappointed at times. It may

only be a mood ; I think it is, but it makes our work difficult.

Good hard work, zealous friends, a small but loyal congregation, a good wife, and happy children are assets which overwhelm the debits. At all times I have found the silver lining. The popular rule of attributing evil and backsliding to all the moods and tools of progress is a weak-minded policy. Good is within our reach, our keeping. The Divine Power is our beacon light, and the grandeur of God's scheme is that conscription of souls is not in the plan. The liberalism of our religion has done more for the New World than all the mystifying and organised mummary of Oriental codes. There is no great peril in freedom ; on the whole it is a stimulating and a humanising force. Even the infidel may live with us ; even the unjust can walk by our side. Caste, force, intrigue, and propaganda may help the powers of darkness for a time ; but in the end God wins, honour triumphs, and the just are gathered to the valhalla of heroes. Oh how I have longed for the gifts of Lincoln, Emerson, or Wesley to scatter that around the world ! A simple doctrine ; known, too, throughout the ages ; yet, strange but true, it is too often brushed aside !

Ministers must use the tools that lie to their hands. After an exhaustive study of the lives of great and good men, I have come to this conclusion, that example is the most powerful factor in everyday life. In my youth I was acquainted with clergymen and laymen of several denominations. The most influential, most powerful, were those who walked like men, face to the blast, heart to the task, and soul attuned to the dreams of Christ and of Wordsworth. In the little acts, the kindly hand-shake, the friendly smile, the gentle pat on a little child's head, an interest in all the good of the home and state, and a benevolence to enemies and fools—these virtues always won. Love is an ennobling thing; it is so warm; it radiates; to the humblest task it brings a freshness and a joy that is arresting. 'There goes a great man' we often hear in the thoroughfares of the world; but 'there goes a good man' is the highest compliment of mankind.

As the years go on I mellow and mellow. The fearful and anxious stirrings of youth have gone. Conservative maybe in most things, but firmly planted by experience and the rude shocks of life. One can stand aside more easily now. One can defer now and again to the foolish. The cynic does not

alarm; the decadent is not so powerful. Main Street of Bunkers Bluff and the Main Streets of other towns are said to be wrapped in the muck rags of materialism—true in parts, but not of the whole. As I walk through the town I see the other side. My old eyes pick up good thoughts, kind acts, good lives, even good intentions, where only evil is said to be. Passing on my pilgrimage, I overhear the taunts of the illiterate and the cries of the vain; these are meant to wound, but not now . . . not now. Within me is a power, an invisible altar of content and charity. To reach the golden age one has to tread the long long trail. There is hunger, hardship, and temptation on the road. Ministers feel, as others do, the unsanctified call of the flesh, the passing lure of the grog-shop, the wiles of dope, and the comforts of slacking. We are but human; but if we only remember the charms of purity and the power of love, dark shadows vanish away, and the road becomes clear again.

This old and simple faith makes man serene. Look round your town; catalogue the true cavaliers; write down bit by bit their psychology. You may find hints of weakness—we are all weak—but you will also discover that for them materialism has no

lures, and their pleasures are found in wholesome walks abroad, in the nodding trees, the pretty flowers, an arresting landscape, the elfish sunbeams, and the smiles of human-kind. This is the cheapest, yet most powerful gospel. For that holy calm all men should strive. This great content is so wonderful because it is so simple. One is but a child. A child creates no mad vendettas; woes are not made by childish hands; homes are not wrecked by innocence and merriment. The world has always loved the voice of children. Against this philosophy the smart set throw their arrows. Mammon also swipes it low, but it comes again; it lives in those fields from which fools have been banished.

From the prairie and the prairie folk I plucked this fine old moral. Uneducated observers and novelists with diseased minds often miss this side of things. All they see is the old house, the broken fence, the sleepy cattle, a disordered barn, men in jeans, women in soiled aprons, children in torn pants, and dogs with their tails down. The rough old trail, the hard springs of the wagons, a scurrying coyote, a policeman with a prisoner, disused and rusty machinery going to the scrap-heap—all these things look commonplace, hard, unpliable, or sugges-

tive of grim slavery and hellish toil. And from such superficial glimpses men create laborious studies of pain, terror, fear, sin, mud, and bestiality. 'What the people want' is the cry of purveyors of yellow journalism and harmful 'realism.' Thus goes on the work of pollution, the constant deadening and sickening of the soul. I make no plea for the pretty-pretty school of art and letters. Not at all; but I do plead for balanced views, the right perspective. The good of the prairie is so wonderful when one knows.

Just as the farmers reaped the golden grain I reaped the gold of character. With the reins lying loose across my horse's neck we wandered over the trails. Between farm and farm lay silent lessons in achievement. Courage, when hailed out, blown out, or burned out; patience, when weeds crept stealthily and wickedly o'er the face of the land; endurance, when crops were poor, as they sometimes are; kindness to an aged horse, that now ambled idly and peacefully across the plain; protection of tender chicks from vultures; a graded road for the little children to go to school; the open door, welcome hand, ever ready meal, and unsuspected snips of philosophy and idealism; love of home, wife, and children; a simple political

creed summed up in 'a square deal.' Even a good word for the great grafter who made 15,000,000 dollars out of crooked schemes of colonisation. Faith, yes! Hope, surely! And charity, *always!*

We must repel this wave of cynicism. We must surely crush the fearful thought—'every man his price.' That is the most horrible thing that is flying around to-day. 'What's he getting out of it?' Thus many test the work of preachers, statesmen, and schoolmasters. All this feeds the madness of discontent. It is fuel to the passions which destroy. It is dope on the eve of a deal in which blackguards revel. The good men in this world can be *too* humble. The wise men can be *too* dignified. The righteous are, therefore, made to look unrighteous, the good deed to be the act of self-seeking puritans. Our masses, toiling, ever toiling, have not had time or brains to conceive all the ills attributed to them. Upon them we foist a thousand crimes, a host of horrible sins. Mute, powerless, helpless, they stagger under the load. Unable to wrestle with the demons of suspicion, doubt, and malignity, they tumble helplessly into the slough of despond and the gloom that is hell.

God so loved the world, that he gave His

only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The sacrifice was for you, for me, for all. We must be worthy of the ancient faith. Let there be light! Let there be truth! Let there be love! Hard, oh so very hard to realise when times are poor, when the cupboard's empty, future uncertain, and men betray! But man is also a warrior; in part a sage. It is good to fight; good to follow the gleam; fine to follow the steps of the Master. The uplifters are not 'the mugs of Main Street.'

This simple faith was fully justified one winter evening when I was called to the house of Jack Gruff. I found him lying on his bed, pale, ill, and about to pass away. There was a quiet gleam of welcome in his eye. His weak hand he held out in friendship. 'Gordon, I'm going. It's all over now,' he muttered.

'I hope not, Jack,' was my confused reply.

'I know . . . I know. . . . And so I sent for you. Guess it was time to pay my dues. . . . You've been square, Gordon. . . . You've been good to this town. . . . You've helped my poor missus when I was "on the jag" and drinking like a beast. I've figured

it out that I'm for Hell. . . . Not afraid, as some blokes are. . . . A man's got to pay the price. . . . But, Gordon! . . . Gordon!' he whispered, 'say you forgive me! . . . Let's part good friends! . . . I'm . . . I'm near the Gates;' and he fell back, panting with pain.

'Jack, I have forgiven you long ago. . . . God will forgive you too. . . . You've lost the fight for evil, but not the hope of redemption. . . . He is with you, Jack . . . with you.'

'Thanks, Gordon! . . . Thanks! . . . Thanks!' he mumbled. His eyes closed, there was a sudden shiver in his frame, then all was still . . . strangely still.

With my head low and heart beating I returned to the manse.

A week later I was called up on the 'phone at midnight. Young Colin Cameron told me his father was ill, seriously ill; would I come out? My answer was 'Yes.' It was a cold night. A little snow had fallen, but the trails were good enough. Putting the saddle on Jimmy, I sallied forth, well wrapped up to face the blast. It seemed a long, long, long road that night. My mission was the saddest in my prairie life. At last I reached

the farm. Ian, my own son, took my horse. Young Colin led me upstairs to where the old man lay. The father was propped up on the pillows. He was like wax, but the fine features of the old man made him look like a king at his last levee. 'Wass that the minister?' he mumbled, his eyes blinking with the light.

'Yes, Colin.'

'Oh, I am glad . . . glad . . . you have kept your word. . . . Old Colin is done this day. . . . I'm going to my fathers, and I'll no' be buried in the glen. . . . That wass hard, that was cruel to me. . . . But "Lochaber No More" will play on the prairie,' he exclaimed with a new found strength and fire in his eye. 'Colin Cameron will die like the men who went to Glenfinnan (the Jacobites in the '45). We wass not afraid of the charge or the grave. My Flora is waiting in Heaven! . . . But I must leave my boys . . . my boys;' and he sank back on the pillows with tears in his eyes.

'We shall guard the boys, Colin,' I said.

'I know. . . . I know! . . . Goot lads. . . . Goot lads . . . kind to their father . . . true to the land . . . true to the land. . . . Wass that the minister?' he asked again.

'Yes, Colin, I'm here.'

‘Has the horse come?’

‘What horse, Colin?’

‘The gray horse from Lochaber. Dugal Cameron was sending it. . . . A fine horse. Bred near Achnacarry, where Lochiel bides now. . . . Lochiel! . . . Lochiel!’ he exclaimed, his strength rising again.

‘The horse will be all right, Colin,’ I said, trying to quieten him, and at a loss to understand what he really meant.

‘It wass for you! . . . for the minister!’ he declared.

‘How very kind of you, Colin.’

‘Your old horse is like Colin . . . done! He wass a good horse to me too, for he carried your wife when my boys were bórⁿ. He carried you, too, when Flora was passing. He carried the gospels to many a lonely heart. . . . He wass fine. . . . fine! . . . So I sent for a young horse from Lochaber. . . . A chief’s horse! When I am gone it will bring you to my boys . . . my boys . . . my boys. . . . Goot lads! . . . Goot lads! . . . True to their father. . . . True to the land! And your goot lady. . . . Wass she tired this day?’

‘No, Colin; she is well now.’

‘I am glad. . . . We kept her from going home. But when old Colin has gone, mebbe

she will see the hills of Arran . . . the herrin' boats sailing up to Campbeltown too. . . . But I'm feelin' bad! . . . Wass that the minister?'

'Yes, Colin.'

'Will you hold my hand? . . . Call the boys. Call Ian too. . . . Call the lassies. . . . Old Colin is going . . . going.'

I rang the bell: the sons, their wives, and Ian came in.

'Wass you all there?' he said in his old commanding way.

'Yes, father,' said young Colin.

'I am happy now. . . . Boys, be goot to the lassies. . . . Be kind to the bairns. . . . Help Ian when I'm away. . . . The minister too! . . . And his lady. I'm Colin Cameron of Lochaber . . . Lochaber . . . Lochaber. But I'll no' be buried in the glen. . . . The prairie. . . . The prairie. . . . Still, it was goot to me. . . . Goot to my boys. . . . It wass home too. . . . But Flora . . . Flora! . . . The boys! . . . The boys! . . . The lassies! . . . The gray horse from Lochaber! . . . Lochaber! . . . Lochaber! . . . Lochaber!' and his voice thinned away.

A slight tremor—Colin was no more.

From near and far came men, women, and

children to follow the old pioneer to the grave. On the wagon we laid the coffin ; round it was wrapped the tartan of the Cameron clan. On top lay Colin's old Balmoral bonnet and the long dirk of the race. From the farm the cortège marched slowly down on to the trail, then, headed by the pipers of the Cameron Highlanders of Winnipeg, the solemn procession marched forward to the grave. The three sons were mounted ; behind them I rode on the beautiful gray mare from Lochaber. Ian, my son, was beside me on his pony, then followed Paul, John, the Scots, English, and other settlers. It was a haunting scene, though now a beautiful memory. Miles from Lochaber, yet so near, for the sad coronach of the pipes wafted us back to the glens. Few words were spoken ; a link with a noble past was shattered. Colin was sleeping. A great good man was no more.

The coffin was lowered.

Paul read the first half of the Burial Service, for I was almost overcome. But in obedience to his long-expressed wishes I rallied my nerves and quietened my emotions. With voice a little hoarse, a little broken, I prayed for the soul of the departed. To the God of his fathers I consigned him. To the memory of

his own and his race I prayed for a long remembrance. He had fought the good fight; won the white flower of a blameless life; sanctified his name, and earned the everlasting glory of God.

Dust to dust
Thou shalt return.

The hard earth rattled strangely on the coffin; four red-coated policemen fired a volley; then the Cameron pipers filled the air with the lament that ever brings tears to the eyes of the Highland host. Thus we fulfilled his bidding, buried him deep with the Cameron tartan round his coffin, the Balmoral bonnet and dirk on the top; and, carried on the winds of heaven, the funeral note, the final message of his race—

Lochaber . . . Lochaber,
Lochaber no more.

THE END.

BOOK II.



THE
PRAIRIE HEART-MENDER

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The Prairie Heart-Mender.

CHAPTER I.

THE GIRL FROM LONDON.

MY job is heart-mending; a job that at times is heart-breaking. But it is the greatest work I have ever engaged in. Strange to say, it is a Government job. The Canadian Government in some things is almost Utopian. Behind the scheme is the burning desire to make newcomers feel at home on the prairie. We know that the prairie is strange to women from the cities of Britain, the United States, and Canada. We realise that all is not gold that glitters, and the promises made by homesteading lovers are often unfulfilled. The fault often lies in the temperament of the man or the woman. Lack of experience, absence of tact, or unwillingness on the part of one or the other sometimes shatters the dreams of Cupid, causing ruin where love should reign.

For this work one must be young; the trails are long, the journeys often hard. One must have lived the life as I have lived it. I am a daughter of the people, child of emigrants, homestead-born, prairie-reared, and college-trained. My age is twenty-eight. My heart has known the call of love, but, for the moment, I find that mending the hearts of others absorbs my love and taxes my energies. The rewards, financially speaking, are not great; but I love my country; I love the people. The prairie is so dear to me. Bald as the prairie is in many parts, I see in it haunting moods, mysterious power, the groundwork of greatness and goodness for those who would have independence, comfort, love, and a happy happy brood of children round the door. Yet I am no wizard. The magic of the fairy is not my portion. I am not good-looking; but I am strong. Faith in the beautiful has kept me clean. My will, my common-sense, my vision inherited from good and wise parents are my greatest assets in this work. Back home in Manitoba there are parents who are dear to me. My name is Olga Anderson.

Now listen to the tale of a couple of

lovers who could not pull together. Word came to me that away in the back blocks, where some ex-Canadian soldiers were farming, Betty B—— was not pulling with Jock B——. I packed my grip and went—a long journey by train. On arrival at the little station I hired an Indian to drive me up to the homestead. It was twenty miles away. The journey, however, was pleasant, for the day was fine. The sun shone, the birds called, the gophers peeped at me from out of the holes, the badger scurried away into his den, while the jack-rabbit hopped and hopped over the broken trails.

It was the springtime. The men were busy in the fields ploughing, harrowing, seeding, and rolling. Six horses were harnessed to the ploughs; they ambled pleasantly along, their tails whisking the flies away. Behind sat the men, guiding with ease the faithful friends; dreaming their dreams too; thinking, thinking of a good crop with which to get the dollars for a new frame house, a bigger barn, dresses for the women and children, a holiday in the east or U.S.A., or a good-going Ford car. So *much* depends on the crop.

At last I neared the homestead I had come to see. My prairie eyes soon saw that all was not well. The fields were silent. Horses wandered idly about with nothing to do. The cattle seemed thin and uncared for. A brood of dirty hens were foraging in the road. The shack was not the shack of a couple making good. Rubbish was around the door; the windows broken and stuffed with paper; the door banging carelessly for want of a screw or two. Around the barn was dirt and signs of hopelessness, and desolation abounded. Only a thin trail of smoke from a chimney on top of the shack suggested life. I sighed. Here was a sad story.

I knocked at the door. A slip of a girl, once quite pretty, but now dirty, careless, and unhappy-looking, opened the door.

‘Good-day,’ I said in a quiet tone.

‘What do you want?’ she inquired, a challenge in her voice.

‘I’m the heart-mender.’

‘You’re too late. We don’t want you.’

‘But I’m here. I have come a long way. I am here to help you. Won’t you let me come in?’

‘No.’

‘You need a friend,’ I said.

‘Not now.’

‘But you can’t go on like that, my dear.’

‘This is our affair, not yours.’

‘But your affairs are God’s affairs, your parents’ affairs, Canada’s affairs, and mine too. I am not a kill-joy. I am a heart-mender.’

‘We never asked you here.’

‘I know; but I heard about your trouble.’

‘Who told you?’

‘Good friends who would help you.’

‘Anyhow, it ain’t a bit of good—*now*,’ she said; there was a sob in her throat.

‘My dear, I’m coming in,’ I said, taking her arm firmly but kindly and leading her into the room.

She burst into tears.

‘Come, Betty, let’s have a cup of tea. I have got it in my grip. You sit down; I’ll make it.’

She sat down listlessly, sobbing, sobbing.

I put the kettle on the fire, swept the table clear of rubbish, put on my little tea-cloth that I always carry, then lifted a cake, some sandwiches, a pot of honey, and a tray of chocolates out of the bag. These I set on the table. And I let her cry; I knew she had to cry. I am always afraid of that grief which is silent and which some-

times ends in madness. In a little while the tea was ready. The sobbing was ending.

‘Now, Betty, let’s have tea.’

‘I don’t want any,’ she replied.

‘Come, my girl, it will do you good.’

‘All right;’ and she sat down.

The warm tea soothed her; she liked the cake; she had not eaten cake for months. The sandwiches, too, were so fresh to her palate, and my smiles somehow gained her confidence.

‘Betty,’ I said, ‘I’m here to do good. Let us have all the troubles out on the table.’

‘I’ll tell you, seeing you have been so kind. I’m from the Old Country. I was born in London. My folks are poor but respectable. I had a job in one of those well-known restaurants in London. You’ve heard the name?’

‘Oh, yes.’

‘It was there Jock met me. He was with the Canadian Expeditionary Force at the time. When I met him he was on leave. We girls were all mad on the Tommies, especially the Australians and Canadians. I had a boy, a nice boy too, in the London Rifles, but Jock came. He looked so nice, so strong, and he stole me from Jim. I

wish to God I had never met him now. He told me lies. I shall never forgive him.'

'What did he tell you?'


'He was so good at the talking; most Canadian men are. We Old Country girls are foolishly fond of kisses and romance. We never see the blue-bird in our English boys; we always look away. I think it's those books of Kathlyn Rhodes that make us silly about new countries and colonials.'

'That seems a little hard,' I said.

'It's true,' she declared.

'Still, I imagine you were happy when you met him first.'

'Oh yes. We had lovely times—theatres, parties, and trips on the Thames. He was very jolly then. He painted such wonderful stories about his great big farm out West. Said I should have horses to ride, a lovely home, a car, and such good fun sleighing and skating in winter. I believed it all, for I was desperately in love with him. He is older than I am; he seemed reliable, steady, and true. I was sick of London; sick of the streets, the same old job, the same house, the same old bed. Canada opened up visions of heaven. And I did work hard to fill my trunks with good things.



My people gave me a lot also. I banked every penny so that I should not be empty-handed. My account then was one thousand dollars. It's all gone skyhigh !'

'Were you married at home?'

'No. I came out West to be married. We were married in town. A jolly wedding, too. I came here with the sleigh-bells ringing. You see the place,' and she waved her hand disdainfully to show the squalidness of things.

'But you didn't expect a mansion surely, Betty?' I said.

'Not exactly. I expected a house, not a shack. I thought the water would be in; I hate pumps. Others have the water in; some have electric light; nearly all have the telephone, except *us*. I have no kick against Canada. My kick is against Jock.'

'Still, Betty, you only get comforts by working hard. I was born in a shack. My folks laboured thirty years to get things nice. It was hard, very hard. But we have a section (640 acres) now, a lovely home, good cattle, and we all received a good education. Is there not something wrong somewhere?'

'Jock!' she exclaimed.

'Is he lazy?'

'Now he is.'

'Was he at first?'

'No; he worked well.'

'What went wrong, Betty?'

'We had bad luck: three bad crops; hail, too, and a bit of a fire.'

'That was unfortunate; but that's the ill luck of the game.'

'Yes; one gets educated to taking a chance, as Canadians say. We were often hungry, but the Soldiers Settlement Board helped us out. I don't know how we could have carried on had it not been for good friends here and at home. But it's all up now.'

'Why?'

'He's gone.'

'Where to?'

'Town.'

'What is he doing there?'

'Drinking at the bootleggers, and playing about with other women. I'm going too! The Government can have this farm back. I don't want it. I'm off! If he thinks he can enjoy himself, I can do that also. I'm sick of misery, sick of slaving here;' and she wiped her eyes in a tragic way.

'But what made him go, Betty?'

'Said I was no good; couldn't stick it—and he was jealous of the hired man.'

'Is the man here now?'

'No; he's down the road at T——'s.'

'Were you fooling about?'

'I was friendly, that's all. He is an Old Country man. He saw I was in a hole. Tried to get Jock to play up and be manly. Jock was furious at his interfering. Said he was a no-gooder. Accused me of fooling with him. Got sulky and wouldn't work; just hung about or went to town like a fool.'

'Did you not try to win him round?'

'Yes; I did my best.'

'Are you sure that you fit into the farming business?'

'I'm not used to it. I don't really like it. I'm used to cities. It's all new, terribly hard, but I could stick it and win through if he would love me. A woman can't work on out here without love.'

'I agree. Still, Betty,' I said, taking my courage in both hands, 'the house does not seem nice. You don't seem to have got things neat and handy. A man likes a nice home, you know.'

'It was nice at first; the prettiest shack out here.'

‘But why let things go?’

‘What’s the use?’ she exclaimed despairingly.

‘It’s home,’ I insisted.

‘A pretty fine one!’

‘It could be a nice home; in time you would win through. We have all got to go through the mill, you know.’

‘I can’t carry on alone. I must quit.’

‘I’m not expecting you to carry on alone. But if Jock comes back and plays up, will you do your best?’

‘Of course I will. I still like him, but I’m not in love with him at the moment. The other man is willing to marry me, but I haven’t the pluck to be dragged through the court. And . . . I like Jock . . . when he’s sober . . . when he’s good;’ and she burst out sobbing again.

‘Will you let me try to patch things up?’

‘Yes; I don’t want mother to know. It would make her unhappy.’

‘All right, my dear. Don’t cry now. It will all come right.’

‘I hope so . . . I hope so,’ said the weeping girl.

‘Now cheer up. I’m off to see Jock. Be good now. Do nothing rash till I see you again.’

‘No; I won’t be foolish. . . . Good-bye . . . thank you;’ and she wiped her eyes.

When going back down the trail I met the man who had been her comforter. Somehow I was not impressed with him. He looked weak. He might be a nice fellow, but also a home-wrecker. I stopped the buggy, got out, and, taking him aside, spoke to him.

‘It’s a shame to see her how she’s fixed,’ he said.

‘But are you helping things?’ I inquired.

‘I’m not hurting her, anyway. I like the girl. If he doesn’t want her, I’m willing to have her.’

‘But you seem to have nothing to offer her. You’re a hired man, aren’t you?’

‘Oh, I can get a shack and a bit of land,’ was his frivolous response.

‘Look here, young friend. You have got to quit the platonic business. You may mean well, but it might lead to disaster. She isn’t a strong-willed person. I’m here to help. If there’s any trouble from you I’ll put the Mounted Police on to your trail.’

‘I mean no harm,’ he protested, his face turning red with embarrassment.

'I don't say you do, but keep clear. I'm on this job now.'

'All right,' was his rather sulky reply as he drove his horses on.

I went to the little prairie town where she said Jock was. I hunted hotels, boarding-houses, stores, &c. At last I found him sleeping off a wild debauch on the hay of a livery stable. A big, strong, handy fellow he looked.

'Are you Jock ——?'

'Yep,' he said with a yawn, stretching himself out lazily and with studied insolence. He knew of me and my mission.

'Are you not going back?' I inquired, getting straight to the point.

'I guess you'd better quit, right now;' and he waved his hand to the door.

'I'm not quitting,' I said in a quiet voice, taking a seat on the hay.

'Gee! You've the nerve of the Devil.'

'A good mission makes me strong.'

'I'm fed up with missions.'

'Still I don't think you'll turn me down;' and I smiled.

'If you keep off my home affairs, I won't.'

'I'm keeping off a tragedy at the moment,' was my reply.

'What!' he said, looking up in an alarmed way.

'If your wife goes west with suicide, you'll be in Regina with your neck in a noose.'

'Hell! It's not as bad as that, is it?' he exclaimed.

'One never knows. . . . Now, are you going to have a quiet chat, and see if we can't find a way out?'

'Talk if you like. I'm willing; but she's no good to me. Can't boil eggs; can't boil water; doesn't know a chicken from a cow. She can't milk, and when we get hailed or blown out she sits down and cries. That worries me, worries me;' and he shook his head sadly.

'But you took her for better or worse. She's pretty; she's good-hearted too. She still likes you.'

'Yes, but she likes the other fellow better,' he declared.

'I wonder if that's true,' I muttered.

'Too true,' was his mournful answer.

'How do you know?'

'She always dances more with him than the other fellows at a dance. He's always coming to the shack for a loan of a binder, twine, plough, or some other gadget. It's all a game.'

‘But if you had been playing square, would she have bothered about him?’

‘I’m as good as there is around here, anyhow.’

‘You’re not making good, are you?’

‘It’s her fault. She’s no good for farming.’

‘Why did you marry her?’

‘I was moonstruck. Had to kiss somebody when I was on leave. She seemed a good ‘un; so I took her.’

‘For better or for worse,’ I said, reminding him of his vow.

‘Worse, I guess.’

‘You can’t leave a farm going to rack and ruin in the springtime, even if you do think that way.’

‘The Board can have it. I’m beating it to Toronto. The lights for me. I’ve had three bad crops, so I’m cashing my cheques.’

‘But if you have three good crops you’ll get your dividends,’ I insisted.

‘I’ve heard that before.’

‘It’s true; you know it’s true.’

‘If you’re lucky. But you need a wife that can wash dishes, make apple-pie, and feed the chickens, if she can’t milk a cow. I’m beat!’

‘You weren’t beat on Vimy Ridge.’

‘No, but we were fighting men. A woman can beat a man any day. Can’t get them at all. They’re the queereſt bunch on this planet. Up to-day and down to-morrow. All tears or all candy. Gee, I was a fool to marry.’

‘What would your mother say to that?’

‘Mother’s a good ’un. She’s way down in Nova Scotia. She can handle cows, chickens too, and I’ve seen her on the binder. Those English women don’t fit in.’

‘You’re too hard.’

‘I’ve got to be. I’m up against it. Haven’t got a cent. Mortgaged up to the neck. What’s the use of trying? Ain’t any use, I tell you!’ he exclaimed in a pessimistic way.

‘You can’t expect to make good on booze and sleeping in a livery stable.’

‘I’m paying the bill, not you;’ and he glared at me.

‘You have a duty to your wife.’

‘Bah! I’m finished! Them honeymoons is only a bit of sugar before you jump into Hell. I know.’

‘Others are happy,’ I ventured.

‘Maybe.’

‘There’s love on the prairie.’

‘When the crop’s good.’

'There are men, once poor, now driving autos out of fine frame houses, and with accounts at the bank.'

'The lucky ones, I guess.'

'All round your place the farms are being ploughed and made ready for a good harvest. Your place is a sight to make men's eyes sore.'

'It's her! Not me!' he declared angrily.

'There's to be a good crop this year,' I said, going on, and ignoring his asides.

'That's the annual dope.'

'No, it's faith.'

'I wish I could buy it.'

'You can't. You've got to believe. You've got to work for it. It beats me to see a big strong man, owning a farm, lying asleep in the hay of a livery stable at spring-time. The old-timers would laugh at you. They would say you haven't got pep.'

'I guess I've as much pep as any man round here!' he roared angrily.

'It would be nice to see your pep working on the land;' and I smiled in a friendly way.

'Don't put the heavenly dope over me;' and he grinned a little.

'I'm only trying to give you the key of happiness and good fortune.'

'Sounds good,' he said mockingly.

'Jock—you've got to quit fooling and get busy,' I said, pushing home my view.

'I haven't the seed; I haven't the cash. Two of the horses are lame; the plough's broke; and she's there—she's putting the lid on me.'

'We can fix you up with seed, get a little cash, arrange for hire of horses, and fix your plough. Now, are you going?'

'I'm game; but what's the good? I tell you, she can't boil eggs, feed chickens, or bring the cow home, never mind milk it. I guess I'll beat it now.'

'You won't!' I said.

'You're giving orders now!' he exclaimed.

'I'm working for Canada, *and* you.'

'If you can make my wife fit in, then maybe you'll make good.'

'I think I can.'

'Can you!' he exclaimed, his face brightening.

'Yes.'

'But then there's the other fellow;' and Jock relapsed into sullenness once more.

'I've fixed him good and well. Told him I would put the mounties on his trail. The girl is as good as gold, but if you

don't get going she'll be off with him to Toronto.'

'What!' And he jumped to his feet. 'I'll kill the swine. I'll riddle his carcass.'

'There's only one way of killing in this business, that is to get the crop in, clean up the farm, fix the fences, put the garden right, and shove up a notice on the door, so that when your wife comes back she'll see

HOME SWEET HOME.'

'Is she off, then?' he gasped.

'No. I'm taking her with me.'

'Where to?'

'A month's course at the Agricultural College in the city. We'll teach her things. The poor girl doesn't know. It's not her fault. You are to blame. You lured her with promises of autos, riding-horses, and a lovely home. You know what you took her to. You know how you have behaved. If there was no real good in you I should say right now you were no Canadian. But I see daylight in your smile, Jock. I feel you are just a bit foolish. You're a worker all right. You want to be happy, I know. I think you would like to see your farm prospering, and pretty little ones running round the door.'

‘By God, I would,’ he said with fervour.
 ‘It’s up to you, dear boy;’ and I took his hand. ‘Come, Jock, let’s make a deal. I’ll fix up the girl so that she’ll milk the cow and make you apple-pie, if you’ll get back and do as well as you did at Vimy Ridge.’

‘I’m yours,’ he answered.

‘Good boy! Will you sign this for me?’

‘Let’s see.’ He took the document, and after reading it, signed it.

I PROMISE

Not to Drink.

To Work Hard.

To have Faith.

To believe in the Prairie.

Make Home Home.

Love my Wife.

And Play the Game.

(Sd) Jock.

‘That fixes things,’ I said.

‘What do you need that for?’

‘To cheer your wife, and get money for seed, horses, &c. That’s not a mortgage, it’s a bill of faith.’

‘You’re a good ’un. I’ll do my best.’

‘I’m so glad. Don’t go back home to-day. We have some things to do there.’

‘Sure. I’ll have a clean-up and follow out to-morrow.’

‘Good-bye, Jock.’

‘Good-bye, Miss Anderson,’ he said with a softness which indicated sentiment and surety. I hurried away, ever so happy with his decision.

When I got back to the shack I found all the furniture outside the door. My heart jumped. I wondered what had happened. But when I entered the door Betty had her sleeves rolled up and was scrubbing, scrubbing away.

‘Hullo, Betty! What’s up?’

‘I’m busy;’ and she smiled.

‘What’s the meaning of all this?’ I said, overwhelmed with joy.

‘I told that hired man what you told him—that he had to quit out of this district. And I also got a wire this morning. It’s on the mantel-piece. Look at it.’

I picked it up. It read:

‘Cheer up. I’m coming Home. Love.—Jock.’

‘So you’re busy?’

‘Very.’

‘I’m glad,’ I said, taking off my jacket

and lending a hand, explaining during the process that I was taking her to the city for a holiday and a month's course at the Agricultural College farm. She was overjoyed. We made things snug. Left the fire ready for lighting; a kettle of water; tea in the pot; a meal served ready on the table. Pair of slippers beside the range. A pipe of baccy next to a box of matches. And I saw Betty pinning the silver flowers of their wedding-cake on to the pillow of his bed. Before we shut the door I left a note on the table:

Betty did all this
Home's Home.
It can be as
Sweet as *you* like.

O. ANDERSON.

When we arrived in the city Betty was fixed up in one of our hostels along with a group of Old Country girls who had married Canadians. Day by day we laboured, teaching them milking, making butter, baking scones and apple-pie, the feeding of chickens, trussing of poultry, preserving jams and bacon, and all those arts so necessary to make home home. In

the evening we had a real good time. We cleared the floor of the dining-hall, danced, sang, played at parlour games, told funny stories, and so cheered ourselves on.

Our labours were appreciated. These girls were so nice; many were just lovely. I could understand our boys falling in love with them. They had such pretty complexions, pretty ways, so handy with the needle, only lacking agricultural knowledge to make good on the farm. Doubtless the new life was strange, hard, too, on the more sensitive. But they all said they thrived on the prairie air. It is so bracing, so exhilarating; that is why the westerners are such remarkable optimists. Bad luck, as a rule, does not worry the native. They know that five bumper crops will put them right for life.

Somehow a wrong conception of Canada has got about. In all the other countries of the world farming has its ups and downs, according to the weather. Canada is just the same, with this difference, that in the West there is six feet of good black soil. In normal years this secures the heaviest crops and finest grain in the world. That is why men go West, and the poor man or woman *does* get a chance.

Betty did well at the month's course. At the end of the month she could milk, and milk well; that was the most important thing. I saw to it that she baked a good apple-pie. She got high marks for her paper on poultry, but she was not high up for jam-preserving or bacon-curing. However, she had mastered the essentials; that was all I wanted.

'I'm not worrying now,' she whispered on the day she was leaving.

'I'm so glad, Betty. Now, don't forget to write to me.'

'Oh no! I won't forget. And I am very grateful for all you have done.'

'That's my job, dear. Good-bye;' and I kissed her.

'Good-bye, Miss Anderson.'

I watched her go, and waved my handkerchief for a long long time. I hoped she would do well.

When Jock got back to the shack and opened the door, he was astonished. He smiled like a boy when he saw the tempting table, the tidiness of things. Next morning came the money from the Board. That day several friends rolled up with horses and machinery to give him a hand. They

liked him and wanted to help him. And so he went forward like a man. By hard work he overtook lost time and got his crop in. When Betty arrived, the shack was as clean as a new pin. Above the door was

HOME SWEET HOME.

Six A.M. next morning.

When Jock woke up, Betty was not in bed. He heard the kettle boiling, heard the cream-separator going, too. He smiled. At six-thirty a smiling girl came in with a cup of tea. Then he laughed; Betty laughed too.

‘Come on, Betty, I’m going to kiss you. You’ve milked the cow. You’ve won.’

‘You’ve worked hard, so you’ve won also.’

‘We’ve all won, Betty;’ and he kissed her again.

Six months later.

DEAR MISS ANDERSON,—Another letter. We have had a wonderful crop. Paid up all our debts at the store, part of the purchase money too. Jock has bought wood to build two more rooms on to the house. We are going to get the water in, and the telephone. Next year we hope to buy a Ford car. He’s as good as gold. We’re ever so happy

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now. I'm as brown as a berry, as fit as a fiddle, and just real good at apple-pie.

Best of all, there's going to be a little one coming home soon. We're hoping it's going to be a boy—like Jock. We shall never forget you. Love from both.—Yours sincerely, BERRY.

CHAPTER II.

THE GIRL FROM DAKOTA.

'**A**RE you Miss Anderson, the heart-mender?' said a tall good-looking homesteader who came to my office in the city.

'Yes, they call me that on the prairie,' I said, smiling. 'Won't you have a seat?'

'Thank you,' he answered, somewhat nervously. Obviously he had come here after a mental struggle.

'Can I help you?'

'Hear me first; then you can see what can be done. I'm an Englishman, son of a big farmer down Devon way. I have been out here twelve years, and made good. I've got a section on the trail south from here. I'm fixed up good and well. Nice frame house, good land, fine cattle, a good car. So I've no kick against the country; it's been good to me. But I'm in a hole, a bad hole. I married a girl, an American, from the middle west last fall. A good-looking girl, too. I met her in a store in

a big town down Dakota way. We only courted a month, then got married. But things are not going well.'

'What has happened?'

'We don't pull. She's a boss woman. I guess she's been used to putting it over her dad and men friends at home. If she doesn't get her own way she's like a mule—kicks hard. We don't have women like that in the Old Country. I'm in a bad fix, a bad fix;' and he shook his head.

'Let's get down to details,' I suggested.

'She insists that I get up first in the morning, light the range, milk the cows, and have her tea nice and warm when she comes down. That's no good for a farm.'

'Has she been used to farming?'

'She was born on a farm, so she knows the whole game of farming; but she's lived a lot in town, working in a big store. She's a good-looking girl, the best in the district. I fancy she has had such a good time that she doesn't want to go back to what her mother did, and what she did herself when she was young. She tells me American women are not serfs, like the Old Country women. Man, she says, has to be kept on a tight rein. She's got a lot of stuff from the suffragettes, too. When she

starts jawing on women *versus* men there's no stopping her.'

'Does she do any of the farm work?'

'None. She keeps to her own department. Sends all the washing to the Chinese laundry in town. She hops about with a komo mop and a duster for an hour in the morning, slips on the dinner, gets into her dress clothes, then sits down with one of those books on psychology or hynotism, while I'm slogging away with the hired men round the fields or the barn. She's not sharing the load. Why, those German women at our place have her beat for work. They do the washing, do the garden, too; give a hand to the man when he's pushed in the harvest, and so help things out. Last week she called a meeting of the women in the Community Hall at the end of our trail and founded the Women's Fun League. This is a scheme for making all the other women like those in the towns of the middle west, where men are mere children in their hands. She holds that women are here for a good time, and she's going to stop the German women from working in the gardens. I don't blame her for that. I hate to see women using a shovel. But she's playing the devil with

the whole community. There's a war on down our way. The fellows are giving me a rough time for bringing her there.'

'I imagine that once you have children all that nonsense will stop,' I suggested.

'She's not going to have any. She's preaching that, too. Says that her mother had ten, and was a slave till she died. This is a new scheme to me. Sometimes I think she is half-mad.'

'Have you tried to reason with her?'

'I have talked it out again and again. Not a bit of good! She's all for noise. The gramophone never stops. The darned thing is rattling away morning, noon, and night. She can't sit down in a restful way with her needle or knitting-pins, like most women do. Buys everything ready-made. Says that's what the stores are for. Her whole brain is time-saving, labour-saving, just like those big ad's you see in the magazines. And she's got the social bug bad. Pink teas, bridge parties, dances, auto rides. She's queen with the women. Leads the community on. It won't do for a farming district. All right for Chicago or New York, where women have not so much to do. We've got to work down our way. So I'm in a hole.'

‘She wants mastering, I imagine.’

‘You can’t boss American women; they wear the trousers, I tell you.’

‘It’s up to you to keep the trousers,’ I said, smiling.

‘Easy talking that way, but if you saw her you would think different. She has a jaw like a man. I admire her grit. There’s a lot of good stuff in her. I can’t help liking her. But she’s upsetting me just awful. She’s like no other woman I have seen. Has her own room, her own bed, takes the best chair, makes me run around for messages at night. One day she pulled on her boots, then stuck out her feet for me to lace them. But I kicked at that.’

‘What did she say to that?’

‘Said I was no gentleman. American men do these things, she says. Seems to me this scheme will turn us men into old Jennies. I’m so sick of the whole darned business that I don’t sleep in the house now.’

‘Where are you sleeping now?’

‘In the barn. I’m trying to beat her down with passive resistance; but she just grins when I come in for meals. Says that woman is boss on this continent. I have read *David Harum*, and a lot of books about Americans, but I never read the

women had gone so far. It's a bad thing, I hold.'

'Depends on how it is done,' I said, smiling.

'I hope you're not a boss woman,' he said, half-amused, half-annoyed.

'I'm not sure what I am, but I do know that we Canadian women are different from English women. We expect men to do more. We do believe that in the old days a woman suffered needlessly, and man did not make things as comfortable as he might have done. That's why we bless Niagara Falls, and go in for electric light, telephones, electric irons, electric washing-machines, and vacuum-cleaners. My brothers would not allow mother to work as she had to do in the old days.'

'Of course not,' he interjected.

'Still we are not so far advanced as the American women. In business the boss woman is most useful, but at home I do feel there must be a compromise. American women undoubtedly have taken advantage of the chivalry of American men. The men in U.S.A. do work hard. They work to have a nice home, to give the women and children a real happy time. I do admire them for that. The cultured American women do

not presume on this good nature. But the wholesale immigration into America, especially the middle west, of European types unused to liberty, unused to prosperity, has brought a condition of things not good for the home, bad for the children, and therefore bad for the state. Over the line they get divorced for incompatibility of temperament; you would have your remedy there all right.'

'No! No! I'm not thinking that way. We Englishman are solid. We don't marry women one day and leave them the next. I like this girl. When she wants to she can be as charming as the fairy queen. There's a tremendous lot of good in her. She's quick; she's handy, too, when she cares. But I can't get her ideas at all. I'm not a brute, but I do feel that woman is not meant to be the boss. It spoils their whole nature. Women are made to love and be loved.'

'Is your trouble not a contest between two strong wills rather than a squabble about who should light the range?'

'Partly, but not wholly that.'

'Looks to me like another American War of Independence. She's doing the Washington business down your way.'

'I *don't* think she is as narrow as all that. She likes the English. She told me that she could have married a dozen Americans, but she turned them down.'

'Why?'

'Said they were all dollars; big business, or Cissys. So she tried me. I don't know what she is thinking. You women are so clever at hiding your real thoughts. Anyhow this boss business can't go on. We are both perfectly miserable. It must stop. So I called to have a chat with you.'

'You have given me a most difficult job,' I replied. 'I'm not sure that I can do any good. A woman of spirit like that resents outside interference. I would rather you went back and *stopped* the bossing.'

'I hate rows. We are a peaceable people, as you know. She's a nice girl. I should hate to send her home. You have been very good at other cases; I wonder if you will help me?'

'I'll try.'

'Thank you very much. You will find her at the Exhibition. She is running a stall showing the produce of our district. Doing it well, too.'

'Very well, I will try.'

'Thank you.'

We shook hands ; he then went out.

By a little manœuvring I managed to get Mrs J—— into a friend's house for tea. She was a handsome woman ; tall, well-made, full-busted, with a nice face, and the will of a superman. Her business training had left its mark. She had been running a department in a store in the middle west. Used to giving commands ; seeing that these commands were promptly obeyed. She truly was most efficient, but very much marred with the same efficiency. In a few minutes I gathered that life, according to her code, had to be organised. A shelf for everything ; labels too. Sentiment somehow had to be chained. Romance was useful, but not to be strained. In the big game of gathering dollars and cents the tender things of the soul had been set aside. Commercially brilliant. Business, of course, is so hard these days that women in business often lose touch with the things that are tender and beautiful. She had gained much, but she had lost much. Now she was expending her energies on social affairs rather than on the lovely side of the home. Nevertheless I liked her. There was much good in her. A baby, I felt, would have upset the 'efficiency'

game. But she was not going to have babies, her husband said. Truly this young woman was disturbing. My friend tactfully left the room to let us talk.

'Your husband called on me,' I said, realising that ambassadorial preliminaries were no use with such a smart young woman.

'I guessed that; I'm interested too. Go on.'

'He is still tremendously in love with you, but he feels he is not boss; that, briefly, is his plea.'

'Isn't he a kid to go putting that sob stuff about? He has got a jag against American women.'

'Your methods are strange to him. The Englishman is different, you know.'

'That's just why I married him,' she replied.

'But you're boss,' I said, smiling.

'In most things women should be. But I don't run his farm. I keep to the home; that's where I ought to be boss. After running a department he shouldn't expect me to be a ten-cent doll that only wants kissing and throwing about. I've been to college the same as he has. Personality is not given to men only. I'm not going to

crumple up into a little shy mouse, sit dumb, knitting stockings, and waiting on man as if he were a little tin god. A woman should be served, not serve. When I see the German women down our way digging with bare feet I'm all on for more freedom. It's time we canned this old harem idea about our sex. In the middle west we have got man in his place, and we'll keep him there. My mother had to slave all her life way back in Dakota. Not for me! The sun shines, the auto goes; so why should I be like a dumb Puritan, missing the good things of life? There's not enough fun on the prairie. If there was more fun there would be more people. The Americans round us mean to shake things up. Your people simply don't know, or don't care, what America and Americans do for you. If there was no America there would be no Canada.'

'We need each other. We grow the grain; you make us goods,' I suggested.

'I guess we helped to make the prairie too. Some of the best farmers around are Americans.'

'Oh yes. We do appreciate them. But that is not quite the point, is it?' I said, smiling.

'It's got something to do with it. There

are a few of them Old Loyalists about our place, who call us Yanks. My husband, who's a bit of a Tory, as all Englishmen are, gets infected with this canned insolence. He wants me to stay home more, let the women alone, give up teas and parties, and be a little brown mouse peeping in and out. He's just foolish !'

'But he means well.'

'I mean well too. I am trying to give the women on our trail a real good time. They have a hard life; not much fun. Day in, day out, it's the same old tune—babies, dishes, hens, cows, and calves. A woman's work is never done. I've helped to get money for a Community Hall. We are putting in a heater. There's going to be dances, concerts, and lectures. We've booked men and women from New York. It's time we stirred them all up from their lethargy. The men don't like it, I know. But I'll bet you ten dollars there will be no women taken to Brandon from our district. I am going to kill loneliness. We've simply got to make things hum to do it. Of course all those old German Don Juans don't like it. They want the women home. I'm not as mad as I seem.'

'I don't think you are mad at all. Your

ideals are splendid. You are really a public woman, not a farmer's wife.'

'I can do both. Farming's easy.'

'Your husband needs a hand at times.'

'We can hire help. We have got the money. He has got the Old Country idea that the woman should be up to her knees in hay or manure, always in or around the barn. That scheme's quite good when a couple are cutting their way. We don't need to do it. Jim thinks otherwise. He has done so well that he can't get work out of his brain. I admire him for that, but he would double his turnover if he would refresh his brain with a little innocent amusement and drive around in the auto more. We are past the pioneering stage on the prairie. There's got to be a higher standard of living. There's room now for an aristocracy of character. I'm going to make it. Jim's a good fellow to grace the procession and head the bill. He's simply got to be an M.P. in Ottawa. When he gets there I'll make him fight for the prairie. I'm ahead of my time, they say down our way, but that's the fool gossip of hayseeds in jeans.'

'Can't you compromise between home and public life?'

‘That depends on what you mean by home. I take it home is a place to sleep in, eat in; and the world the place to work in and work for.’

‘Are you not really toying more with pink teas than social reform?’

‘You can do nothing these days without tea and cake. It isn’t fair of you to say I’m just wanting to be queen.’

‘He says you would make a lovely queen in your own little home.’

‘He’s greedy; all farmers are. Wants me all to himself. But I like the world; I like the people. I like to help women who can’t stand up to their bad husbands. And I don’t deny I like a bit of good clean fun. What’s music for? What’s dancing for? What’s singing for? We need it all down our lonely trail. I was born on a farm. I’m just tired of watching farmers resist education, taxes for roads, innocent pleasure, and the other schemes intended to make the prairie a good place to live in. They talk about the men in Wall Street, but I tell you that there are more mean men in farming than in dry goods or hardware stores.’

‘You’re wrong there, Mrs J——. Farmers must be thrifty. The sun doesn’t always shine, you know.’

‘Thrift should often be spelt “m—e—a—n.” These hard old men have filled the cities with their sons. If the fathers had been more generous with the dollars I guess there would be no headlines in the press about Depopulation or the Loneliness of Farming. Jim is not as hard as others around, but he’s got to learn that I’m trying to help him in my own way. Jim doesn’t know yet that he could double his turnover by keeping his jacket on and giving orders. His dollars are lying idle in the bank. I would make that money useful. There can be big farming as well as big business.’

‘But we don’t want big trusts operating over miles of land. We want small farms, more people. When you start hawking shares for Land Farming Corporations, then you will turn the whole prairie into a dump for hired men. It’s freemen we want. Keep Wall Street out of it. It was the individuality of American and Canadian farmers that made this continent worth while.’

‘Still, Jim needn’t worry seeking for cents, when he could be catching dollars.’

‘It’s the cents that count, *not* the dollars.’

‘I guess you know what I’m getting at!’

‘I imagine you are really wanting him

to ease down, take life easy, and enjoy what he has earned. That is not a bad scheme——'

'And get to Ottawa!' she interjected.

'You're too ambitious,' I suggested.

'I'm real American.'

'But I imagine your husband is more interested in the land than in public life.'

'Men have to be shoved on; you know that.'

'Englishmen resent it; at least they resent it when they know. There are two ways of leading a man. I prefer persuasion of the gentle order.'

'Why, if it weren't for the women, U.S.A. would be a farmyard still.'

'Washington, Lincoln, Emerson didn't require much pushing along. Their wives inspired them. Inspiration usually arises by contact with sweetness, kindness, and devotion. The old women of U.S.A. may have suffered, but I can imagine that their equanimity averted unseemly squabbles and the limelight of yellow journals and the Divorce Court. In some things we are ahead of our mothers; in other things—such as tact, forbearance, and grit—I think we are behind them.'

'You're a holy roller!' she said jokingly.

'I'm anything you like ; but I just hate to think that a nice girl like you can't pull with one of our farmers. Half the trouble arises out of petty issues and questions of precedence, rather than any deep-rooted antagonism. You're both so strong in character that a wall of dissension has arisen. It is a gracious thing to bend, also beautiful to forgive. If you understood the English character better I imagine you could see daylight. It's like this ; an Englishman is conservative, puritanical too, and stands for the fireside rather than autos, good times, and jazz bands. In some things he is a mule, and terribly stubborn. He insists on being master, and believes in good manners and reverence. I'm speaking, of course, of the decent Englishman, not the exception. He doesn't take off his hat in an elevator like the American man does. He won't fuss around at a railway station. He won't parade his wife on the promenade like the Prize Beauty from Los Angeles. He hates show, side, and noise. He is all for restfulness and dignity. Round his house he puts a wall or a big high fence. If you read Emerson he will tell you how English homes suggest fortresses, safeguarding the inmates from those they do not want to see or meet.

He's snobbish, if you like, but that often is a veneer which covers admirable qualities. He is brave, generous, and genuinely true. When he marries he marries for life, not for a week-end. Your husband, I imagine, has these virtues, also some defects. He is a farmer. He has had to work hard. He believes in work. He feels that a wife should sometimes share the burden. I see no indignity in milking cows, making butter, or baking apple-pie. I'm a Canadian, but I would get up in the morning, light the fire, and get my hubby a cup of tea in bed. A man who works out on the prairie needs much encouragement. You mean well; I like your schemes; but if you want to help the world, start with your husband.'

'Gee! I'm getting angry!' she exclaimed.

'It's no use, my dear. I'm paid to be civil,' I replied.

'You're backing Jim, anyhow!' she protested.

'And I'm backing you also. I never imagined you were a girl with so many excellent ideas. You will be a godsend to the prairie. I'm really very proud to have met you. You have got pep, as they say. You will certainly make things hum. I like you for that. You may think it impertinent

of me, young as you, to offer advice. But I've seen a lot of trouble on the prairie. It's a good thing to have a third party as a judge. You're starting the wrong end, that's where I differ with you. It would be a bad show to make a success of your schemes and lose your husband. It would be a fine thing to make a success with your husband, then do as much as you can for the people around you. Start at home. Why, I'm just envying you. I could do with such a nice man for a husband.'

'I can manage my rivals,' she said, smiling again.

'I'm sure you can. I would love to see you making your farm a model farm; the house a model house; the garden beautiful; plenty of lovely flowers; shady corners; everything restful and attractive. One good home like that will do more than a thousand meetings. One good life will live forever. Immortality is gained by devotion to the dull things, not by attending to the gramophone or kicking up one's heels in a Community Hall. Much of the social reform I see about is an excuse for the bunny-hug and organised adultery. We don't want Coney Island in Alberta, Manitoba or Saskatchewan. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, if you like; slave as he was,

his life is a lesson in magnanimity and lofty devotion. And read "The Cottar's Saturday Night," by Robert Burns.'

'Say, isn't that sentiment?' she interjected.

'What made you marry?' I replied.

'You've got me by the throat now; still, I don't see that we can load up sentiment for every job. It's got to be kept in its place. When work's over I believe in it.'

'Sentiment won the Civil War; sentiment kept Lincoln high and pure; sentiment kept up the hearts of the Pilgrim Fathers when they saw the Indians cutting the throats of their children; sentiment made you and me; sentiment keeps Jim from sending you home.'

'Say, he isn't talking that way, is he?' she exclaimed in an excited way.

'No, he is too great a gentleman. He is trying to find a way out of his troubles, because he loves you.'

'Did he tell you that?'

'Yes.'

'That's real good of Jim; but why didn't he come and tell me all about it?'

'He's sleeping in the barn, isn't he?' I said with a grin.

'I wish he wouldn't,' she replied in a quieter tone.

'It's all arisen through this "Efficiency" business. It's not your fault. It's the incessant talk in stores and offices about fifty-fifty, putting it over, 100 per cent., and so on. Romance gets buried in the swirl. If ever romance gets real busy inside you, I am sure you will make history. I don't believe you're a boss woman at all——'

'Here are the children come to say good-night,' said our hostess, opening the door and ushering in three lovely children in their pretty pyjama suits. Lovely little ones! Such pretty fair hair, blue eyes, and sturdy figures. They came forward, the youngest putting her hand into the hand of Mrs J——.

'Say, aren't you sweet? What's your name?'

'Joan,' she said, nestling into the visitor's arms.

'You lovely kiddie!' and she kissed her.

'Mammy's lovely too. Gives me dollies and candies. This is 'Teddy';' and she displayed the ruffled old teddy she had been hugging to her side.

'Won't you lend me Teddy?'

'Oh no! He's my dearie; but mammy will let you sleep with Teddy and me.'

'Wouldn't that be fine!'

'Come, darling, it's time to go to bed now,' the mother said.

'Not yet, mum. I want to stay with the lady. She's going to tell me a story.'

'Just one, then,' said the mother, smiling.

Mrs J—— racked her brain and recalled the story of Little Bo-Peep. She related the tale in a charming way.

'More! . . . More!' said the little girl.

'No, darling; it's time for bed.'

'You'll play with me to-morrow?' Joan inquired.

'Oh yes.'

'A big hug, then;' and the little one put out her arms again to be embraced.

The exponent of Efficiency kissed the little one tenderly, beautifully.

THE HOME BRANCH,

—N.

ALBERTA.

DEAR MR J——, I have seen your wife. Meeting her is a great pleasure. She is so pretty and so capable in lots of ways. She is really charming. She has splendid ideals, too. I think you are lucky.

Her trouble is her great ambitions. She wants to do so much. She wants to bring honour to you and yours by her many good schemes. She is really a public woman.

But in course of conversation I pointed out that all

good work begins at home. I don't know if my advice will bear fruit. And I do not care to intervene further. It's up to you.

I would suggest you pull down the blinds and take her in your arms.—Yours sincerely,

OLGA ANDERSON.

(The night the letter came.)

They had been sitting in the little drawing-room of the farm. Talk had been pleasant, if a little formal. Each wondered how to approach the other. Both were so strong, both so proud. That night (he thought) she looked so lovely. Her new dress fitted her so well. There was something alluring about her eyes. The silken texture of her shoulders was fascinating. She was so human, so womanly, somehow. She had not asked him to bring her the candies, get her the magazines, have a look at the jam on the stove, or give the cat its milk. She had his chair all nicely cushioned when he came in. On a little table he had found a pound tin of tobacco, a new pouch, and a lovely pipe with his initials engraved on it. The room, too, looked different. She had bought a Chesterfield for two. It was standing empty—calling, calling. And she was sitting there so quiet, so friendly, so full of understanding.

‘Have a chocolate, Mary?’ he said, rising.

‘Thank you. They are sweet,’ she replied, rising from her chair, then sinking down on the new Chesterfield.

‘Looks nice, that bit of furniture,’ he suggested.

‘Yes, it’s meant for two.’

‘I’ll sample it, then;’ and he sat down.

‘Nice, isn’t it, Jim?’

‘Sure. The company’s good too.’

‘You silly young man;’ and she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him. There were tears in her eyes.

‘I’m not going to the barn to-night,’ he announced.

‘I won’t let you. I’m going to be old-fashioned, very English now, Jim,’ she said, smiling through her tears.

‘You dear American girl!’ and he drew her close in his arms.

‘My Jim! My dear, sweet Jim!’ ‘Efficiency’ vanished. She was a darling once more.

She lit the fire in the morning.

THE END.

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